

LUC HERMAN AND BART VERVAECK

Handbook of Narrative Analysis

SECOND EDITION

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Handbook of Narrative Analysis

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Jesse E. Matz, Kenyon College

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Handbook of Narrative Analysis

Second Edition

LUC HERMAN AND BART VERVAECK

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People cannot do without narratives. From the oldest myths and legends to postmodern fabulation and beyond, narration has always been central. Postmodern philosophers may have submitted that there are no longer any grand, encompassing narratives, but they also contend that everything amounts to a narrative, including the world and the self. If that is correct, then the study of narrative is not just a pastime for literary theorists in their ivory towers. Instead it unveils fundamental culture-specific opinions about reality and humankind, which are narrativized in stories and novels.

Theories of narrative are misconstrued if they insist on abstraction and lose touch with actual stories. This handbook aims to avoid this. It is geared to a concrete illustration of the relevance—and the potential shortcomings—of major narrative theories. This is why we refer to two short stories that we briefly present in this introduction and that we have made available in the appendix to this book: “Pegasian” by Charlotte Mutsaers and “The Map” by Gerrit Krol.¹ Although these short stories have been selected pretty much at random, they can still serve to illustrate several issues in narrative theory. In the introduction we only indicate what these problems might be, and we formulate a number of related questions. The rest of the book consists of the various answers to those questions.

Theory and practice

Obviously we will not restrict ourselves to an analysis of just two stories. When discussing the various theories, we will quote from a number of other narrative texts but always from literary narratives in prose. Literary prose has in fact always been the starting point of the study of narrative, which since its upsurge in the sixties and seventies has come to be known as narratology and which provides the framework for our undertaking. There are many other forms of narration, and (mostly in chapter 3) we will therefore repeatedly turn to an ex-

ample of graphic fiction, “City” by Wasco,² which is also included in the appendix. Still, our main point of interest remains literary prose.

1. Traditional Questions

*The narrator
problem*

Contrary to poetry and drama, a prose story cannot do without a narrator, or so most people seem to think. The first lines of “The Map” seem to feature one of those good old narrators who knows everything and hovers over the universe of the story. He tells about the Christian shops whose shades were rolled down on Sundays. Yet in the second paragraph it becomes clear that this seemingly objective voice is in fact subjective since it belongs to an I-narrator. It seems obvious to imagine that this I-narrator is present already in the first paragraph but that he remains more or less in the background. However, it is not that simple. Let us suppose that the first paragraph is expanded into an entire chapter and the second paragraph into yet another full chapter. In that case, are we speaking of different narrators? Or are we going to think of these two voices as belonging to one and the same narrator who switches back and forth between the relatively impersonal voice of an all-knowing third-person narrator and the very personal voice of a first-person narrator?

The answer to this question may well depend on the size of the passages at hand. The briefer the passage, the more one tends to choose the single-narrator option. The first sentence about the shops with their rolled-down shades could be followed by “But one of these Sundays, on my way to children’s church, I saw part of a map.” In that case the first sentence would be attributed to the first-person narrator as well. In the case of a paragraph this becomes less obvious, and in the case of a chapter even less so. All this may seem quite irrelevant, but in fact it amounts to a fundamental problem. Is it possible to say that a text is narrated by one specific type of narrator? Or is there a constant change? Would it be correct to suggest that a traditional nineteenth-century novel, for instance, is narrated by a third-person narrator?

*The narrator’s
scope*

Put in more abstract terms, we are dealing here with the demarcation of units for investigation. Does a narrator have to be defined for every unit, or does every unit have to fit into a larger subdivision of the novel or story? A case in point, to which we will return, is the famous monologue by Molly Bloom in the final chapter of *Ulysses*. If you con-

sider this chapter separately, you could say that Molly narrates what is going on in her mind. However, if you consider this chapter in conjunction with the rest of the novel, you could say that there is an omniscient narrator who quotes or recounts Molly's thoughts. Drawing a borderline between narrative units is therefore of paramount importance. If the chapter is a separate unit, then the character is the narrator. If the chapter is part of the larger whole, then the narrator is not a character at all.

Let us reconsider the first-person narrator of "The Map." The act of seeing seems to be very important for him. One Sunday in his childhood he notices that the shades of one particular shop window have not been fully rolled down, and he goes on to spot a cycling map through the slit that has remained: "Never had I seen such a map, with such minute detail." Is this I-witness the same as the figure who reports the discovery? Or do we have to say that the I-witness is a little boy and that the I-narrator is much older, perhaps the adult who is looking back? In retrospect he does not see in the same way as the child. These two figures are not only separated in time, they also do not share the same view. The story does not explicitly thematize this distinction. It could have been thematized as follows: "Later I would see many more maps, but none of them would entrance me as much as this one." In "The Map," the rift in question is only addressed toward the end of the story. What amounts to an exciting discovery for the child has become routine for the adult. In the last paragraph, a sentence such as "[Later] my dream would fade away" proves that the I-narrator differs from the boy who makes the discovery. Indeed, how could the child know that his dream would fade away later? The narrator knows more than the boy, especially the disenchanting outcome of the story that leads him to throw out the map: "I haven't kept it either."

*Narration and
perception*

The reader who puts all the I-figures in this story into the same bag misses out on the thematic essence of the story—the loss of a child-like enchantment. This loss only emerges when the reader realizes the difference between the boy and the narrator. This is just one example of the way in which a narratological analysis can contribute to an interpretation focusing on content. In this case the act of seeing is indeed the main theme. The narrator announces it in the opening sentence with the closed shops, and he develops it in "those two forbidden

*Narration and
interpretation*

inches” that enable the boy to see the map, which in its turn enables him to see mapped for the first time the areas he would otherwise have crossed and biked unthinkingly. The real enchantment resides in the graphic representation of reality. The transition from reality to representation on the level of content reflects the narratological development from someone who sees and acts to someone who narrates. We will repeatedly stress that a narratological analysis does not have any value as long as it does not connect with the contents of the story.

*Narrator and
character in
“The Map”*

There are a few other problems with the so-called I-narrator in “The Map.” The first paragraph features the following sentence: “There was a counter behind which (‘he’s nice, she’s wearing the pants’) Mr and Mrs Paalman operated as if it were a grocery store.” The brief comment in parentheses describes Mr and Mrs Paalman, but as a reader you never get to know who does the actual talking. Perhaps this view corresponds to the village opinion. In any case, the speaker is not a character in the story. He or she is merely a voice instead of an embodied figure. This abstract and general agency might relate to “one,” who is mentioned a little later in the text and becomes a speaker: “One waited one’s turn and when it was finally there, one uttered one’s wishes, in the manner of ‘a light novel for a girl of seventeen’ or ‘a historical novel, preferably illustrated. . . .’” The narrator quotes impersonal visitors who do appear in the story and who therefore differ from the impersonal village opinion in “he’s nice, she’s wearing the pants.” Quoted figures can apparently hail from inside as well as from outside the story.

Obviously, figures do not only appear in the guise of quotation marks. The narrator can summarize what they think or say, in which case these talking and thinking figures actually recede in favor of the summarizing narrator. Take a sentence like “The village contended that Mrs Paalman was the boss at home and that her husband was a mere meek shadow.” If the narrator had summarized the village opinion in this way, these different words would also create a different view. In the imaginary summary the wife becomes more threatening while the husband seems to disappear altogether. For a reader it is often very difficult to make a clear distinction between what was originally said and what the narrator made of it.

*Narrator and
character in
“Pegasian”*

This certainly applies to the story by Charlotte Mutsaers. Since she does not use any quotation marks, it is often impossible to differenti-

ate between the words of the characters and those of the narrator. "The riding master³ answers that you catch a very special wind with it," is a summary in indirect speech by the narrator. The original words of the riding master are not directly reproduced, but instead they are paraphrased and presented in a *that*-clause. It is impossible to decide whether the summary remains close to the original. One might surmise that the riding master said, "You catch a very special wind with it," in which case the summary is extremely true to the original, but there is no way to be sure. Indirect speech always betrays an intervention by the narrator. Less so in the case of direct speech because it quotes the original expression. The fourth paragraph of "Pegasian" might be such a direct quotation, even though there are no quotation marks. "Do they make you go faster?" would then equal the actual question the female character asked her riding master.

Problems, however, are just beginning. Who says "true dressage, just like real life, doesn't have anything to do with racing"? Is it the riding master and is he quoted literally? Or is it the narrator who is speaking here? And if so, is the formulation his, or does he choose an unusual way to represent a statement by the riding master? This strange method of speech representation occurs again and again, as for instance in the following sentence: "Little girls . . . did well not to shoot off their mouths." This is not a direct quotation, otherwise the sentence would read, "Little girls do well not to shoot off their mouths." Neither is it a summary, since in that case the sentence would read, "The riding master thought that little girls did well not to shoot off their mouths." The actual sentence sits somewhere in between the two, which makes it very difficult to decide which words belong to the riding master and which ones to the narrator. That position which belongs to neither of the two traditional methods of speech representation is occupied by free indirect speech. As we will see, this intermediate form has caused many controversies in structuralist narratology, and it has also become central to more recent proposals on the evocation of speech.

At the end, "the riding master doesn't feel like explaining anything anymore. Sometimes your patience simply runs out." Who pronounces the latter sentence? The narrator? Or, in the case of free indirect speech, the riding master, who may have sighed, "Sometimes my patience sim-

ply runs out”? This is important, since in free indirect speech “your patience” seems to be that of a specific character; that is, the riding master. However, if it is the narrator who says, “Sometimes your patience simply runs out,” then “your” is much more general and refers to a general agent outside the story: “People will sometimes run out of patience.” The next sentence, “Furthermore, all this questioning ruins the class, notably for the other ladies,” is probably a statement by the riding master, represented in free indirect speech. This makes it more probable that the brief sentence about patience is also a statement by the riding master. But one can never be sure.

In the last paragraph another “you” appears: “Whatever. As long as you take off.” Either this is an idea of the female character, and in that case the “you” can be a general “one” or a transposition of “I” into free indirect speech; or this is a statement by the narrator, in which case only the general interpretation is possible. The general “one” does not appear in the story as an embodied figure, but the transposed “I” of course does.

*Inside or
outside
the story*

In “Pegasian” by Mutsaers, this ambiguity concerning inside or outside the story is present from the beginning. In the first sentence, the main female character might consider that “when horse riding you might best be wearing a real pair of riding breeches.” Who is this “you”? Is it the main character to whom the riding master says that she should wear proper riding pants, or is this another general you-figure, a “one” that hovers over the story and is not really addressed? Does this really matter? As we will see, it really does since the difference between elements within the narrative world and those outside it is one of the most fundamental distinctions made by traditional narratology. It has already become clear that stories are somewhat casual with regard to this abstract difference, and we will find this repeatedly in the course of our investigation.

In “The Map,” the distinction is mostly easy to make. In “he’s nice, she’s wearing the pants,” we have a general agent, the village opinion, that does not appear as a character. If this agent were to be turned into a customer in the bookshop, then she or he would become a character in the story, for instance someone who would wish to buy “a light novel for a girl of seventeen.” Even if the you-figure in “The Map” does not speak, it is relatively easy to decide whether it belongs to the narrative

world or not. "On the corner of little Brouwerstreet and Ebbingestreet, for instance, you had the Paalman bookshop." This "you" can be understood as "one," a general and abstract agent who does not assume any concrete form. He or she does not appear as a visitor to the small town, while the "one" who talks does, as a bookshop customer. On the other hand, it could be said that also the I-figure as a young man is contained in the abstract "one" since he too obviously knew the bookshop on the corner. As a result, Krol's general "one" also occupies a position between the I-figure within the narrative world and the abstract agent outside it.

The fact that "Pegasian" often does not allow us to decide the position of the you-figure is highly significant. The reader can connect the form of narration with its content. Maybe the "you" in the story cannot properly be separated from a general "one" because the story has allegorical dimensions. That which holds for the female "you" on the horse does in fact hold for everyone. One could even speak of a moral, which, as happens often, the story reserves for its last few sentences: "Whatever. As long as you take off." In other words, the thing the you-figure learns in this short story resembles that which the reader (and human beings in general) must learn as well. The method of overcoming gravity is not important as long as you take off.

We do not believe it is farfetched to connect the confusion of figures inside and outside of the story with the story's content. This connection is precisely what makes narratology relevant. If narratology becomes a mere formalistic game in which the distinction of various narrators does not go hand-in-hand with a discussion of what they actually tell us, then the contents of a narrative remain mistakingly untouched. Conversely, it would be wrong to forget the narrative aspects of a story and to focus exclusively on content. Whoever insists on doing the latter not only misses out on various thematic and interpretive layers but also reduces a text to its supposed content or message. In fact it is the way in which a story is narrated that turns it into what it is. Those who insist on denying the importance of the method of narration by reducing a story to content might just as well go to the movies or watch television because both of them can offer similar content.

Only a narratology that deals both with the narrated world (content) and also with the way in which this world is represented (form) has any relevance for text interpretation. We consider interpretation precisely

*Inside or
outside:
interpretation*

as the effort to connect the content of a particular object—in this case a literary text—with its form. This connection works both ways. Form always implies content, and content in its turn clarifies the meaning of form. Such a connection is by no means readily evident. The reader has to discover it, and such a discovery always reveals a certain ideology. Reading and ideology will therefore be addressed momentarily.

2. New Questions

The problems we have dealt with so far all have to do with borders, such as those between the story's various passages; narrating and seeing; then and now; talking and acting; inside and outside the story; and the words of a character and those of the narrator. In general, traditional narratology tries to draw these borders as clearly as possible, while more recent theories of narrative emphasize the transitions and potential confusions. The interest in transitions also explains why recent approaches no longer consider a literary narrative in terms of a closed system. They insist that a text always functions in a context, while traditional theory largely remained blind to this.

*Ideology and
context*

Context always has to do with ideology. We conceive of ideology in its widest sense as the collection of conscious or unconscious views of the world and what it is to be human, which means that for us the term need not have any negative connotations.⁴ This view of ideology allows for the study of various elements. In "The Map," one could look for the narrative's religious aspects. Indeed, the story deals with Christian shops whose shades are rolled down "so that people would not be seduced on Sunday to return and buy something on Monday." This ironic formulation suggests that religion wants to hide things but in the process only makes them more attractive. This explains the attraction of the "two forbidden inches" that enable the boy to see the map. Seeing and not seeing do not merely constitute the story's themes or its technical aspects, but they also have a major ideological import. Religion doubtlessly plays a role in the boy's desire, which is not coincidentally described with a word—"prospect"—related to seeing: "The prospect I was going to cover the earth with my body. To be everywhere . . ." The latter is only given to God.

In "Pegasian," ideology could be thought to relate to the difference between male and female aspects of narrative. The riding master can

easily be simplified so as to appear as the representative of male attitudes. He demands submissiveness, imposes rules, and thinks that the heavenly feeling at stake in the story can only be attained by seriousness and study. To the psychoanalytically oriented reader, the riding master might even represent the paternal agent. The female figure, on the contrary, comes across as much more frivolous. In her view study and rules do not matter all that much, and she promotes that which is carefree and unregulated. The unorthodox narration in this story could then be thought to undermine (male) discipline and to promote the free-floating transience of (female) lightness.

When extending narratology to the study of the narrative's context, attention must obviously be paid to the literary context as well. In this respect, "Pegasian" might be compared to the story "Up in the Gallery" by Franz Kafka.⁵ This story likewise deals with a pupil in a riding school and her ruthless riding master who enjoys cracking the whip. Also in "Up in the Gallery," the male and female perspectives clash. The story consists of only two paragraphs. In the first one we get a description of how the female rider would be bullied by the male character. In the second we get exactly the opposite. The male character adores the female rider. The reader who knows this story will undoubtedly hear echoes of Kafka in the story by Mutsaers, which will affect the narrative. This means that the analysis of a story cannot remain independent of the reader who brings the story to life. While the traditional approach hardly makes any room for the reader, more recent theories give him or her a central position.

Literary context

The reader and the context—literary as well as ideological—perhaps constitute the most important new ingredients of contemporary narrative theory, but narratology has expanded in other directions as well. Since the 1980s a number of new approaches have been developed, some of which contain significant revisions of classical structuralist theory. In the final chapter of this book, we discuss a representative selection of these new "postclassical" approaches, highlighting their potential for interpretation and making sure to show just how they improve narrative theory. However, it is important not to throw out the narrative baby with the structuralist bathwater, and therefore the second chapter of this handbook will provide a sizeable summary of traditional narratology geared to classroom treatment. Starting from a tradition-

Reader and context

al division between story, narrative, and narration—terms we have so far used in their non-technical meaning—we have brought together all narrative elements structuralism can be thought to offer as potentially important for interpretation. Obviously, structuralist narratology did not come into being in a vacuum, which explains why in the first chapter we discuss the early stages of narrative theory and also some important theories that were developed simultaneously with structuralism and that therefore already betray an awareness of its approach. Our overall aim in this handbook is to make narrative theory available to those who are interested in close and ideologically relevant readings of literary prose. We are aware of the ideological dangers inherent in our self-appointed status as facilitators, but we have tried to come up with (con)testable possibilities rather than take-it-or-leave-it solutions.

CHAPTER 1

Before and Surrounding Structuralism

Structuralism has undoubtedly offered the most popular theory of narrative. It was able to build on an age-old tradition, a lot of which it rejected. Yet structuralism also held on to a number of classical concepts, some of which we will explain in this chapter. In the course of these explanations we will also present a few more recent theories that do not really belong to the structuralist canon but that have made important contributions and have very often led to interesting discussions with structuralism. We do not aim to be exhaustive or, for that matter, to provide a history of narratology.¹ Instead we mention only those theoreticians and concepts that still figure in narratological discussions.

1. Story and Plot

If narratology is the theory of the narrative text, then it should first offer a definition of narrative. Traditionally a narrative is considered to be a sequence of events. This formulation is highly problematic, and some of the problems it entails seem to defy solution. First of all, this definition simply shifts the problem in defining narrative to the equally problematic concept of “event.” Of what does the event in “Pegasian” consist? Rather than a narrative, isn’t this text perhaps a sketch or a scene?

Second, one could ask what kind of sequence of events appears in a narrative. Can we already speak of a narrative when one event follows the other in time? Or does the link between the events have to be stronger? For instance, does there have to be a link of cause and effect? In order to answer this question, the novelist and theoretician E. M. Forster introduced his famous distinction between *story* and *plot*. For the time being we will work with these two terms, but later on in this book we will replace *plot* with a pair of technical terms gleaned from structuralism: *narrative* and *narration*. According to Forster, story is the chronological sequence of events. Plot refers to the causal connec-

Forster

tion between those events. Forster provides the following example of a story: “The king died and then the queen died.” This sequence becomes a plot in the following sentence: “The king died and then the queen died of grief.”²

Unfortunately the distinction between temporal and causal connections is not always easy to make. Human beings apparently tend to interpret events succeeding each other in time as events with a causal connection. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan quotes the following joke about Milton: “Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*, then his wife died, and then he wrote *Paradise Regained*.”³ The joke resides in the suggestion of an (unspoken) causal connection between the death of the wife and the rediscovery of paradise. The sequence seems chronological, but it has a causal dimension as well.

Events
and their
connections

This means that the distinction between plot and story is by no means absolute. The example readily shows the importance of the reader, who interprets the sentence about Milton and thus turns the story into a plot. We do not reject the fundamental distinction between the two levels, but we want to make clear from the start that such a distinction comes down to a theoretical construct, which doesn’t tie in with concrete interpretations by actual readers. The sequence of events is always the work of the reader, who makes links between the story’s several incidents. This provides the plot with its dynamic, and it also gives rise to the idea that something is in fact happening. Just like the sequence of events, the event itself turns out to be dependent on the reader’s input. It is impossible to define an event *in abstracto* once and for all. What happens in “Pegasian”? A reader who approaches this text as we have in our introduction might say that quite a lot is happening here. There is a discussion between teacher and pupil about the correct way to ride a horse, followed by a double space and a resolution in which the question of who is right reveals itself to be less important than the fact that both characters use the horse to defy gravity. In “The Map” the events may seem more easily discernible—the acquisition of a map, the bike rides relative to it, and more generally the mapping of ordinary activities—but still, how the events are discerned will depend on the reader.

One may doubt whether meaningful connections that the reader makes between events can be reduced to causal connections. In

“Pegasian,” although we do not see all that much cause and effect in the plot development, there is a meaningful transition from the discussion to the conclusion. It is a transition from dogmatism to relativism, from dressage or submission to freedom and takeoff. These connections are not causal, but they are significant and not merely chronological. A plot therefore depends not only on causal connections but on a wealth of relevant connections that transcend mere chronology and are always introduced by the reader.

If we consider plot to be an event sequence meaningful to the reader, then we still have to distinguish the narrative text from other genres. Does a newspaper article constitute a plot-driven narrative? Do non-linguistic sign systems result in such narratives? Do movies, plays, comic strips, and video games all come down to this type of narrative? For us they do. We define plot-driven narrative as the representation of meaningfully related events. Such a representation can use any sign system, so for us Wasco’s “City” definitely amounts to a story.

This means we use a broad definition of narrative, one that is even broader than that proposed by Susana Onega and José Angel García Landa in their narratology reader. They say, “A narrative is the semi-otic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way.”⁴ In our view the last six words of this sentence can be dropped. For us, meaning in meaningfully related events cannot be reduced to temporality and causality. It results from the interaction between reader and text.

*Definition of
narrative*

Since we extend temporal and causal links to meaningful connections at large, we deviate from the traditional view on the so-called minimal story—with “story” used here, contrary to Forster, in its general meaning as a synonym of narrative. The concept of the minimal story fits the structuralist search for the smallest units of a text. It has been developed to determine when one can speak of a narrative. If a character says, “Yes, I can come tomorrow,” does that mean we have a story? No, Gerald Prince says, since a story consists of at least three ingredients: an initial situation, an action or event, and an outcome.⁵ Connections must be temporal as well as causal. For instance, “John was happy, then he lost his girlfriend, and as a result he became unhappy.” Rimmon-Kenan criticizes Prince’s definition and submits that a temporal connection is sufficient to speak of a minimal story.⁶ For

us, meaningful relations suffice, and they might even be metaphorical, metonymical, or thematic, *as long as the reader considers them significant*. “Yes, I can come tomorrow” does not amount to a narrative, because it does not connect events in any meaningful way. “He could not come then because he was ill” does constitute a narrative since it does make a meaningful connection between events. In this case the link is simply causal, but different links can also create a minimal story. “It was raining hard, in the streets as well as in his heart,” is a minimal story too, as it makes a significant metaphorical (or symbolic) link, and it does not imply causality or temporal sequence.

2. Telling and Showing

In order to avoid complicating the following discussion, we will temporarily assume that we can distinguish more or less easily between events and reality on the one hand and their narrative representation on the other. A narrative never provides a perfect copy of the reality constituting its subject. Persons who narrate what has happened to them will always summarize, expand, embellish, and leave out certain aspects of their experience. Since a narrative text always makes use of a sign system, it is always mediated and will never show reality directly. On the stage certain events can be shown, but this hardly applies to a novel. All this relates to the age-old distinction between what Plato called *mimesis* and *diegesis*.⁷

Mimesis Mimesis evokes reality by staging it. This is evident in the theater, but narratives too have moments that tend toward mimetic representation, for instance, literally quoted conversations. In this case the narrative almost literally shows what was said in the reality evoked by the text, and yet a complete overlap between narrative representation and the “real” conversation is out of the question. Short phrases like “he said” already indicate an intervention by the narrator. Furthermore, chances are high that the time necessary for the reader to process the conversation in the text will not exactly coincide with the duration of the original conversation. The latter even applies when reading a text meant for the stage, which after all only approximates mimesis. There will probably be a major difference between the duration of the performance and the time necessary to read the text on which it was based.

Diegesis summarizes events and conversations. In such a summary the voice of the narrator will always come through. This voice colors narrated events, which are therefore no longer directly available. “The Map” recounts how the boy enters the store and asks about the enchanting map: “Monday afternoon, in the bookshop, I pointed to it. I did not have enough money, so that I had to wait until Saturday.” This summary probably covers an unreported conversation in which the shopkeeper mentions the price of the map, and the boy concludes he will need his next weekly allowance in order to buy it. The narrator summarizes this situation instead of showing it.

Diegesis

In the Anglo-American tradition before structuralism, the difference between diegesis and mimesis equals the difference between telling and showing, between summary and scene. In “The Art of Fiction” (1884) and other theoretical writings, Henry James established his preference for a narrator whom the reader can barely see or hear and who tries hard to show as much as possible.⁸ In *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) Percy Lubbock, under the influence of James’s novels, favored showing to telling.⁹ A mimetic novel usually contains a lot of action and dialogue. In strongly diegetic texts, on the other hand, narrators do come to the fore, so that they ostentatiously place themselves between the related scenes and the readers. In postmodern narratives narrators can behave in such an extremely diegetic way that readers start to distrust them. So little is left of the original scene that you wonder whether the reported event actually took place.

Although mimesis and diegesis may look like a binary pair, they really constitute the two extremes of a continuum on which every narrative occupies a specific position. “Pegasian” appears more mimetic than “The Map,” not least because Charlotte Mutsaers shows conversation much more directly than Gerrit Krol and because the time of narration in the Mutsaers narrative adheres more closely to the duration of a scene than it does in Krol’s piece. In “The Map” long periods such as the one in which the main character bikes around are summarized in a few sentences. In “Pegasian” the original conversation between the riding master and the female rider remains almost untouched. However, the difference between the two narratives is far from absolute. In narrative prose there exists no such thing as pure mi-

*Transition
from mimesis
to diegesis*

mesis or diegesis. Summaries always have their mimetic aspects, and mimetic representation always has moments of summary as well. This also holds for a graphic narrative like Wasco's "City," as the sequence of panels does not cover the two characters' entire visit to the city.

This combination of mimesis and diegesis has been typical of the novel from its very beginnings. On the one hand the novel is a diegetic genre, and in that sense it forms the opposite of drama, an avowedly mimetic genre that dominated the literary system until at least the end of the eighteenth century. On the other hand novelists often defined their new art by pointing to the mimetic properties of their texts. Authors such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Jonathan Swift wrote introductions to their novels in which they presented their "new" way of telling as a form of the "old" showing. They paradoxically defended the trustworthiness and prestige of the new diegetic narration by calling upon its mimetic opposite. Whatever found its way into their books was not supposed to be an imaginary summary by a narrator but rather a truthful representation of scenes that actually happened. The tension between summary and scene is inherent in every form of narrative, and it remains central to any discussion of contemporary prose—witness, for instance, the recurring polemic about the combination of fact and fiction in autobiography.

3. Author and Narrator

It has become a commonplace that the author of a book must not be confused with its narrator. However, a total separation between these two agents proves inadequate. Autobiographical fiction, for instance, simply thrives on the close connection between its author, narrator, and main character.¹⁰ Occasional discussions about supposedly improper statements in fiction also prove that the theoretical separation between author and narrator does not remain clear in practice. Sometimes authors are even sued for statements made by their characters or narrators. This goes to show that the connection between author and narrator often plays out on the level of ideology.

Wayne Booth has provided a theoretical analysis of this connection in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), one of the first classics of narratology. A narrative text, Booth writes, is a form of communication, and therefore you always have a sender, a message, and a re-

ceiver. These three concepts do not simply translate into author, narrative, and reader. More communicative agents are involved. In his study Booth does not deal with the empirical author in any great detail, but he inserts three more agents between author and narrative, which we will discuss one by one.

The *implied author* does not actually appear in the text. Implied authors do not have an audible voice, and yet they may form part of a narrative. They constitute the source for the aggregate of norms and opinions that make up the ideology of the text. In other words, the implied author is responsible for the worldview emanating from a narrative. This view can be established in a variety of ways, for instance, on the basis of word choice, humor, and the manner in which characters are introduced. The implied author may have a different ideology than the characters or the narrator. Empirical authors may develop an implied author who is opposed to a specific worldview, but that does not prevent proponents of this ideology from speaking up in their novels. According to Booth, the distance between implied author and narrator offers an excellent criterion to test the latter's reliability. The more the narrator's statements resemble the implied author's ideology, the more reliable the narrator will turn out to be.

Implied author

This point about the proximity between the narrator and implied author does not hold. The implied author and the narrator's reliability are not offered in the text itself, but instead they are construed by the reader. There exist no objective procedures to derive the implied author from a narrative. The importance of the reader for the construction of the implied author shows through in the alternative names proposed for it by other critics. Seymour Chatman prefers *inferred author*.¹¹ Gérard Genette likes *auteur induit*.¹² The degree of the narrator's reliability is a subjective matter as well, which critically depends on the reader's preconceived ideas about reliability and trustworthiness.¹³

Problems with the implied author

As a construction, the implied author therefore depends on the reader and on the textual elements as they are interpreted by the reader. That turns the implied author into a paradoxical concept. On the one hand this implied author is supposed to be at the root of the norms and values in a text and in this way would give the reader direction. Chatman defines the implied author as the "agency within the narrative fiction itself which guides any reading of it."¹⁴ On the other hand

the implied author depends on how the reader handles the text. Ansgar Nünning correctly suggests that the location of the implied author in the communicative structure of fiction is very unclear. In theory implied authors occupy a position on the side of the sender since they connect to actual authors, but in practice any implied author amounts to a construction by the receiver (the reader), who makes use of the message (the text) in order to arrive at this construction.¹⁵ The exact position of the implied author remains vague. Nünning criticizes Chatman because the latter first says that the reader constructs the implied author and then lets this construction coincide with the text: "The text is itself the implied author."¹⁶ Eventually Chatman combines reader and text in a definition of the implied author as "the patterns in the text which the reader negotiates."¹⁷

Such a blurring of the borderlines between sender, message, and receiver is wasted on structuralist narratology, which attempts to separate these elements as strictly as possible. No wonder Genette opposes the concept of the implied author. He maintains the strict separation between the empirical author, who remains outside the text (and therefore also outside narratology), and the narrator, who belongs to the text (and to narratology). Genette considers an intermediate figure such as the implied author entirely superfluous.¹⁸ Opposites meet in connection with this issue. Antistructuralist theorists, who do not regard language as a formal network but rather as subjective expression, hold the same opinion as Genette. Peter Juhl, who studies literature on the basis of intention and expression, contends that a literary work can only say and mean something when readers and critics connect it with an empirical author who guarantees the seriousness and authenticity of the text. The real author must not be hidden behind an imaginary construction, since that would mean that statements in a text lose their value: "The propositions which a work expresses or implies are expressed or implied, not by a fictional 'implied author,' but by the real, historical person."¹⁹

The concept of the implied author thus appears highly problematic. Narratology can function perfectly without using the term. Furthermore, a theory that does use it might degenerate into anthropomorphism (since the term humanizes an element allegedly pertaining to the text) and biographism (since readers and critics often en-

hance the implied author with elements from the author's real life).²⁰ Biographism is inherent in an approach like Juhl's, which eventually reduces the implied author to the real author. We accept the implied author only as an intermediate position, that is, as a construction resulting mainly from the interaction between text and reader. The reader can consider the implied author to be a reflection of the real author, but both these authors in fact amount to constructions by the reader and so, obviously, does the reflection.²¹

Next to the implied author, who remains invisible in the text, Booth places the *dramatized author*, who does become visible. This is the traditional authorial narrator, whom we will also encounter in the theory developed by Franz Stanzel. Such narrators do not function as characters in the fictional world, since they hover over the narrative, but traditional authorial narrators do become visible through first-person narration. The dramatized author appears only as a narrator, not as a character. Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Masque of the Red Death" provides an excellent example. This story deals with a mass casualty incident within a fortified monastery as the result of a plague known as the "red death." Not a single person survived, and so the narrator was not present as a witness either. Yet sometimes this narrator becomes visible as the agent in charge of narration: "It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But let me first tell of the rooms in which it was held."²²

*Other narrative
agents*

Booth also conceives of the *dramatized narrator*, who does appear in the story as a character. Such narrators take part in the scenes they describe, either as observers or as agents. Finally, *undramatized narrators* tell the story without being seen. They constantly show the action through the eyes of the characters so as to remain out of sight. They never use the first person, which distinguishes them from dramatized authors. "Pegasian" could be thought to sport an undramatized narrator who would then show us everything through the two main characters. "The Map" has a dramatized narrator who appears as an agent in the story, while telling the story.

Summing up, three agents may appear between author and text: the implied author, the dramatized author, and the narrator—dramatized or undramatized. This division implies both a hierarchy and a shift. The first agent sits closest to the author, while the last occupies the position

closest to the text. In chapter 2 structuralist narratologists will prove very explicit about their preference for such neatly separated levels.

Visibility and
presence

Even the most humble undramatized narrator still comes up with a certain amount of summary. Narrative never comes down to purely mimetic representation. A narrator is not absent when hardly noticeable. Visibility and presence are two different dimensions, and one of the biggest merits of structuralists such as Genette and Mieke Bal is the fact that they have pointed this out. Those who confuse invisibility and absence conflate two characteristics and end up with the erroneous view proposed by Chatman in his classic study, *Story and Discourse* (1978). He speaks of “nonnarrated stories” and proposes a quotation from a conversation or diary as an example of “nonnarrated representation.” According to Chatman, narrators are absent whenever they represent dialogues as a kind of stenographer or diary fragments as a kind of collector.²³ In our view there is definitely still a narrator in these cases, although not one who is directly visible. We agree with Rimmon-Kenan, who contends that there is always a narrating agent, even in the representation of dialogues or written fragments. The agent who presents these elements to the reader may be invisible but cannot be absent.²⁴ Chatman’s confusion of the two also shows through in the continuum he posits, which moves from absent narrators over covert narrators to overt narrators. The latter two concern visibility; the former deals with presence. By placing them on one line, Chatman denies the difference between the two dimensions.

4. Narrator and Reader

If a story forms part of a communicative situation in which a sender transmits a message to a receiver, then the latter must also be given some credit in narrative theory. The sender does not turn out to be one easily identifiable agent, and we will see that the receiver of a story does not simply add up to a monolithic entity in the guise of *the* reader either.

Mock reader
and implied
reader

According to Wayne Booth, every text envisions a specific reader with a particular ideology and attitude. This reader forms the counterpart to the implied author, functioning as a second self. Just as the narrator’s reliability depends on the close ties between narrator and implied author, the reliability and the quality of reading depend on

the similarity between the implied author's ideology and the ideology of the reader: "The most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement."²⁵ Booth does not use the term "implied reader" for this reader, but he borrows the concept of the *mock reader* proposed by Walker Gibson in 1950.²⁶ In reception theory, however, the implied reader does appear, although it must be said that Wolfgang Iser's definition of this concept hardly corresponds to Booth's mock reader. For Iser the implied reader is the sum total of indications and signals in the text that direct the act of reading. Important indications can be found in passages resulting in a problem or mystery, the so-called gaps. Iser submits that in the course of its history literary prose has come to feature more and more of these gaps.²⁷

Just like the implied author, the mock reader is an abstraction that cannot be heard or seen in the text. All the problems mentioned in connection with the implied author also apply here.²⁸ Just like that counterpart, the mock reader occupies an intermediate position by being neither the concrete individual reading the text nor the agent explicitly addressed by the dramatized author or narrator. For this particular agent, narratology usually reserves the term *narratee*, a concept proposed by Gerald Prince.²⁹

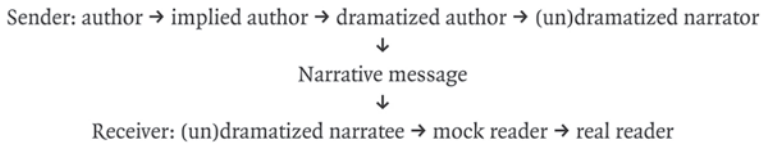
Just like the narrator, the narratee can be either dramatized or undramatized. In an epistolary novel the addressee of a letter often acts as a character in the narrative, but that is not really necessary. The undramatized narratee may stand either close to the mock reader or far removed. In the collection containing "Pegasian," Charlotte Mutsaers also writes a "letter to [her] brother Pinocchio." This letter, which starts with "Dear Pinocchio," has an obvious narratee, but he never appears in the story and in that sense remains absent from it.³⁰ A good understanding of the narratee therefore also requires a clear distinction between visibility and presence.

Every text has a narratee, even when she or he remains invisible. Neither "Pegasian" nor "The Map" exhibits an explicitly acting narratee, but the two stories are obviously addressed to someone. Just as there is always an agent of narration, there is also always a narratee. Here we deviate again from Chatman, who posits a *non-narratee* as the counterpart to his nonnarrator.³¹ We do agree with Chatman's

suggestion that narrator and narratee do not have to mirror each other when it comes to their visibility. A narrator who acts as a character does not have to address a similar narratee. The narrator-character in “The Map” does not address another character. Conversely, a narrator who does not act as a character may very well address specific characters, perhaps in order to scold or applaud them. In that case the narratee belongs to the universe of narrated events, whereas the narrator remains outside of it.

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, each side of the communicative spectrum in a narrative has its own specific agents. Second, these agents do not necessarily mirror each other. The implied author addresses the mock reader; dramatized authors and any dramatized or undramatized narrators address the narratee, who can exist on various levels. The narratee can belong to the narrative universe or hover above it like the dramatized author, as well as stand close to mock readers or very far from them.

The communicative situation of narrative can be schematized.³² Such a schema might look like this:



Adapted from Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 154.

Classical structuralist narratology restricts the interaction between sender, message, and receiver to the agencies within the text: narrator, narrative, and narratee. This partly harks back to the Russian formalists, who opted for a strict separation between regular and literary communication. As we will make clear in chapter 3, the reader is central to postclassical narratology. But the author has made a sophisticated comeback as well, for instance in the work of Henrik Skov Nielsen, who claims “that the voice we hear in fiction is actually often the voice of the author and not the voice of a narrator.”³³ In his effort to tie “narration more closely to its flesh-and-blood author,” Nielsen

too rejects the idea of an implied author: "To realize the full potential of authors, we should 'employ' rather than 'imply' them."³⁴ Sylvie Patron studies narrative production as a form of enunciation in which "the author [is] the arch-enunciator, as in theatre, or more simply the narrative's real subject of enunciation."³⁵ In this she aligns herself with Käte Hamburger, who has stated that third-person narratives are told by the "narrating poet" or "lyric poet," not by a fictive narrator or by the biographical author.³⁶ Author and reader are combined in the notion of "posture" developed by Jérôme Meizoz as a mixture of discursive and nondiscursive forms of self-presentation, as well as in the reader's author image as proposed by Fotis Jannidis and Sandra Heinen.³⁷

Calling upon speech act theory, Mary Louise Pratt argues that the separation between literature and everyday communication comes down to the "poetic language fallacy," and she proposes to integrate the narrative communication of a literary text into the study of regular, day-to-day "natural narrative."³⁸ This proposal nicely conforms to speech act theory, which starts from the idea that every form of communication must be seen as an act, more specifically, as a contextual interaction between speaker and hearer. Only in a concrete situation do words get their meaning and can some statements exert coercive power. According to Pratt, the reader always considers the interaction between narrator, narrative, and narratee as a reflection of the "natural" communicative interaction between speaker, message, and hearer.³⁹ The reader places literary narration into a larger context that provides conditions for successful communication, such as comprehensibility, honesty, and the belief in what is being said. To the degree that a literary text meets these requirements, it assumes an authority that allows its statements to be considered meaningful.⁴⁰

*Literature
and daily
communication*

Such an insistence on context has the advantage of showing which requirements must be met before a literary text can be recognized, understood, and analyzed. Structuralist narratology does not concern itself with these requirements, since it takes recognition and understanding for granted. It does not ask where they come from and how they become possible. Yet this shortsightedness enables the narratologist to analyze the building blocks and mechanisms of literary narration from up close without worrying about the larger, nonliterary context.

5. Consciousness and Speech

Representation of consciousness

One of the crucial problems of narrative analysis concerns the ways in which the characters' statements and thoughts appear in the text. In principle the difference between sentences that have actually been uttered and unspoken thoughts does not really matter.⁴¹ In both cases we are talking about ideas and emotions belonging to characters, which an actual conversation may of course render more clearly than an unspoken reflection. Characters who are actually speaking may have ordered their thoughts better than someone who is thinking or dreaming, but this does not always have to be the case. Conversations can be very tentative and chaotic, while a sequence of thoughts can be quite clear. We will indicate the evocation of both thoughts and conversations with the term *representation of consciousness*, and we will address this matter at length since it constitutes one of the major challenges to narrative theory.

The central problem of consciousness representation comes down to the relationship between the representing agent and the one who is being represented. If a narrator represents a character's thoughts, one may ask to what extent this representation will be pure and authentic. The reader may think that he or she gets the character's actual ideas, while in fact he or she may only get formulations and opinions belonging to the narrator, who paraphrases the ideas in question. We have mentioned this briefly in the introduction in connection with "Pegasian," and at that point we distinguished three forms of representation: direct speech, indirect speech, and free indirect speech. We will now develop this division with the help of an authoritative study about consciousness representation in literary narrative: *Transparent Minds* (1978), by Dorrit Cohn.

Cohn distinguishes two kinds of consciousness representation, which imply two different relationships between narrator and character. First, narrators who represent consciousness can *coincide* with the character whose thoughts they represent, in which case the narrator most often uses the first person. Such narrators can possibly represent their ideas and feelings in the second person—for instance, when self-directing the comment, "You're too slow; you're getting old"—but in fact this "you" comes down to a split-off from the I-figure. Second,

narrators who represent consciousness can *differ* from the character whose thoughts they represent, in which case they use the third person. The second person could be used here when the narrator addresses the character. “Pegasian” is narrated in the third person, and for this Cohn coins the phrase “third-person context.” “The Map” constitutes a first-person narrative, which Cohn refers to as a “first-person context.”

According to Cohn, third-person representation has no fewer than three types, which roughly correspond to indirect, direct, and free indirect speech. Cohn calls the first type *psycho-narration*. Here an omniscient narrator presents a character’s consciousness without literally quoting, as in, “He sincerely believed she would make him happy.” In psycho-narration the characters’ unconscious may be represented since the narrator has unrestricted access to their interior selves. In fact this method provides the only way to render the emotions and thoughts of which the character is not aware. It is also the most traditional method of consciousness representation. “Traditional” here does not mean that this method would be old-fashioned or that it would have been completely mapped. In psycho-narration the border between reporting narrator and represented character sometimes becomes difficult to draw. Which words must be attributed to the narrator and which to the character? Doesn’t the narrator alter the original words? Is the narrator perhaps being ironic?

*Third-person
consciousness
representation*

*Psycho-
narration*

The various relationships between narrator and character can be placed on a sliding scale between dissonance and consonance. A narrator can be at odds with the thoughts and statements of the character. To illustrate such dissonance, Cohn discusses a passage from *Death in Venice*, by Thomas Mann. The main character, Gustav von Aschenbach, thinks it is too late to flee from the doomed city, but the narrator doubts this: “Too late, he thought at this moment. Too late! But was it too late? This step he had failed to take, it might quite possibly have led to goodness, levity, gaiety, to salutary sobriety. But the fact doubtless was, that the aging man did not want the sobering, that the intoxication was too dear to him. Who can decipher the nature and pattern of artistic creativity?”⁴² This quotation shows that a so-called omniscient narrator may also entertain doubts and develop uncertainties and that dissonance does not necessarily mean that the narrator distorts a charac-

*Dissonance and
consonance*

ter's thoughts. In this passage you can clearly see what the main character thinks and how the narrator reacts. A conflict between narrator and character does not automatically mean that the narrator censors or alters the character's consciousness. Neither does it have to mean that narrators distance themselves from the characters. A melodramatic exclamation—"Who can decipher the nature and pattern of artistic creativity?"—could be seen as an echo of Aschenbach's typical pathos, in which case the narrator adopts an aspect of the character after all—but of course this adoption may be meant ironically.

Consonance does not seem to leave narrators a voice or contribution of their own. They render the characters' thoughts and reflections without any trace of criticism or rejection. The narrator's consciousness almost seems to coincide with the character's, making it impossible for the reader to separate the two clearly. Something of the sort happens in "Pegasian," in which the narrator does not create any distance from the thoughts arising in the minds of the characters. Neither does the narrator side with one of them. It is difficult to figure out whether this narrator prefers the riding master or the female rider. As the narrator does not intervene, or hardly does so, consonant psycho-narration comes close to literal consciousness representation.

*Quoted
monologue*

Literal consciousness representation by means of quotations constitutes the second type in a third-person context. Cohn calls it *quoted monologue*, a term she prefers to more traditional ones such as interior monologue and stream of consciousness. In any case, this variant comes down to the direct quotation of a character's thoughts in the first person and in the present tense. As the quoting agent, the narrator can largely efface any self-evidence. This narrator can even cover up any tracks of presence, including little phrases such as "he said" or "she thought."

In *Ulysses* one often notes that an omniscient narrator relinquishes that status to a character, so that psycho-narration turns into quoted monologue. For instance: "He stood at Fleet street crossing. Luncheon interval. A sixpenny at Rowe's? Must look up that ad in the national library. An eightpenny in the Burton. Better. On my way."⁴³ The first sentence clearly features the narrator, who could continue the psycho-narration as follows: "Bloom thought it was time for a lunch break. He asked himself whether he would have a six-pence lunch at

Rowe's." Instead the narrator goes for direct quotation of the stream of thoughts in Bloom's mind.

As long as a monologue is set in the first person and the present tense, it is easy to decide whether the sentences originate from the consciousness of the character or from that of the narrator. Person and tense obviously indicate quotation and therefore quoted monologue. But when person and tense are absent, things become more complicated. "Pegasian" features the following passage: "And it wouldn't hurt to consult a few books on cavalry. Horse riding without background information doesn't make sense for anyone." These opinions belong to the riding master, but since they appear out of context, it is impossible to decide whether they amount to a quotation. Maybe the narrator is present here in the form of free indirect speech, which could characterize the sentence prior to this passage: "Little girls who have never personally experienced this heavenly feeling did well not to shoot off their mouths." The past tense ("did") might suggest that this is not a quotation but a free indirect representation of consciousness. Perhaps this method of representation continues into the next few sentences.

Free indirect speech brings us to the third type of third-person representation: *narrated monologue*. As has already been mentioned, free indirect speech is suspended between direct and indirect speech. Here is a simple example:

*Narrated
monologue*

Direct speech: He asked her, "Can you leave tomorrow?"

Indirect speech: He asked her whether she could leave the next day.

Free indirect speech: Could she leave tomorrow?

Free indirect speech drops the introductory main clause ("He asked her whether") so that the reported sentence becomes the main clause. It also holds on to the word order of the quotation (in this case the inversion in the original question), and it does not adapt indications of place and time ("tomorrow" is not replaced by "the next day"). Exclamations and interjections that disappear in normal indirect speech are kept. A quotation like "No, no, I have done it today" becomes "No, no, he had done it today" in free indirect speech. These are all characteristics of direct speech, but other than that, free indirect speech does apply the

typical changes of indirect speech. It changes the tense and switches the personal pronoun.

The combination of direct and indirect speech often does not allow a reader to decide who is saying what. Indeed the words pronounced or thought by the character seem to be mixed with those spoken by the narrator. A classic case is *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert. Quite a few readers considered this novel shocking because they attributed the character's ideas to the narrator, whom they would then identify with Flaubert. To them, instead of Madame Bovary trying to negotiate her infidelities in free indirect speech, it was Flaubert himself who presented morally reprehensible action as a form of bliss.

The confusion between character and narrator appears clearly in the following passage from *Madame Bovary*: "Her soul, wearied by pride, was at last finding rest in Christian humility; and, savouring the pleasure of weakness, Emma contemplated within herself the destruction of her will, leaving thus wide an entrance for the irruption of His grace. So in place of happiness there did exist a higher felicity, a further love above all other loves, without intermission or ending, a love that would blossom eternally!"⁴⁴ The narrator speaks in the first sentence; in the second, Emma Bovary comes in through free indirect speech. Readers who do not notice the shift could imagine that it is the narrator who ecstatically glorifies eternal love.

The fact that free indirect speech has caused scandals in the course of literary history points to the ideological implications of a certain narrative strategy. Narrated monologue combines the character's ideology with that of the narrator, and because of this ambiguity the reader has a hard time figuring out the ideology promoted by the text. What does the implied author look like in *Madame Bovary* or "Pegasian"? Does Flaubert's narrator really consider Emma's adultery an escape to happiness? And does the narrator in "Pegasian" agree with the final lines of the story that advocate taking off, regardless of the means? Both narratologist and reader will have to decide for themselves where to draw the boundaries between implied author, narrator, and character. A traditional reader will want to draw them as clearly as possible even if the text rules out an unequivocal choice.

The potential confusion increases when it is no longer possible to tell the person of the narrator from that of the character—in other words,

when the narrator's speech is self-referential. In third-person representation the use of the first person clearly signals a quotation from the character. In a first-person narrative this is not the case anymore. Here a sentence in the first person can be a representation of the consciousness either of the narrating I or of the experiencing I (the I as character), and very often it becomes difficult to make the distinction. Where does the experiencing I start and where does the narrating I end? Usually a space of time separates the two figures, and a typical autobiography, where the older and wiser I tackles the younger and more naïve self, can serve as a good example. Sentences such as "At the time I did not know things would take a different course" prove that there is a clear distinction between the narrating I of the present and the experiencing I of the past. But often it is not that simple.

While at the beginning of "The Map" one can easily distinguish between the eager boy and the disappointed narrator, it becomes much more difficult to do so near the end. The story deals precisely with the way in which initial enthusiasm changes into indifference. This confusion between I-narrator and I-character is even bigger in Gerrit Krol's novels. They feature many short fragments separated by a double space. It is often impossible to assign a time reference to these fragments, so that one is unable to decide whether the speaker is the I in the present or the I from the past.

Cohn's three types in the third-person context reappear in the first-person context. The first-person equivalent of psycho-narration is *self-narration*. Here I-narrators summarize their memories. They do not quote themselves as younger individuals but instead talk, in a way similar to indirect speech, about the ideas and feelings they once had. Self-narration too can be consonant or dissonant. The latter is the case in the following passage from *Voer voor psychologen* (Feed for psychologists), an autobiographical novel by Harry Mulisch in which the narrating I (the older and wiser Harry) belittles the experiencing I (his younger counterpart): "Again my magic had immediately assumed a black and shady shape. At that time I also started to write, in the most appalling conditions one can think of, artistically speaking. Appalling because my orientation was entirely spiritual . . . and the artistic endeavor is in fact the most unspiritual of all."⁴⁵ These are clearly the words of the narrating I. His comments do not intend to create the im-

*First-person
consciousness
representation*
Self-narration

pression that they accurately represent what young Harry specifically thought about art and the spirit. There is hardly any indirect speech here in the literal meaning of the term. Instead of a truthful recording, the reader gets a crude summary. If psycho-narration and self-narration are indeed related to indirect speech, then the latter must be considered in the largest possible sense as the summary account of what a character has said or thought.

In consonant self-narration the critical voice of the narrating I remains absent so that it seems as if the narrating I's formulations are completely determined by what the experiencing I thought or felt at the time. The novel *Asbestemming* (Destination for ashes), by the Dutch author A. F. Th. van der Heijden, provides a clear example. The narrator, who also happens to be called Van der Heijden, describes how during his father's funeral he for the first time in his life develops the feeling of fatherhood: "Under a high arch of music, deep down there, I clutched my son against me. I do not say this after the fact, the understanding came about at that very moment: that's where my fatherhood was born. Hardly ever was I so intimate with a human being as then."⁴⁶

*Self-quoted
monologue*

For Cohn, the quoted monologue of the third-person context becomes the *self-quoted monologue* in a first-person context. In this first-person version of the quoted monologue the narrating I quotes itself as a character. Here's an example from the novel *Sunken Red*, by the Dutch author Jeroen Brouwers: "All I thought was: since she's dead anyway, I'll tchoop her doll with the eyes."⁴⁷ In the absence of quotation marks, if the introductory main clause ("all I thought was") were dropped, the reader would have only the use of the present tense to decide whether it is the quoted younger I who is talking or the reporting older I. But if the present tense is used for a general truth, then there is a problem. The I-figure from *Sunken Red* describes a memory of torture he witnessed as a child in a Japanese internment camp, and the following sentence appears after a colon: "—the sun is the cruelest instrument of torture the Japs have at their disposal, the sun is the symbol of the Japanese nation."⁴⁸ Do these words belong to the boy or to the older narrator who is writing the story?

*Self-narrated
monologue*

This kind of ambiguity grows in Cohn's third type of first-person consciousness representation: the *self-narrated monologue*. Here the use of free indirect speech causes the present tense of the quotation to

become past tense. As a result, narrative passages dominated by the narrating I (Cohn's self-narration) surreptitiously shift to indirectly quoted monologues in which the character is talking (self-quotation). In "The Map" the young I-figure discovers a map of Dorkwerd village. His thoughts are rendered as follows: "I could be surprised by the degree of detail and especially by the name I read: Dorkwerd. The village I knew so well and which I had never seen on a map!" The first sentence contains words by the narrator and is an example of self-narration; the second sentence can be seen as an example of free indirect speech reproducing the thoughts of the character, and it can therefore also be seen as an example of Cohn's self-narrated monologue.

Readers of a novel or story seldom consciously stop to make a distinction between the many ways of representing the consciousness of characters. However, this does not mean that the distinction would be irrelevant. On the contrary, a certain variety in consciousness representation makes for many of the characteristics a reader can attribute to a text. Quoting thoughts, for instance, may become monotonous, especially if short phrases such as "he thought" or "she believed" are repeated over and over again. On the other hand, quotations may reinforce the reader's impression of truthful narration. Alternation in consciousness representation may also determine the rhythm of the text. Thus a long interior monologue may be followed by a brief summary of thoughts. By choosing a specific method of consciousness representation, narrators can manipulate the audience. If they criticize a character's emotions, they help readers toward a specific interpretation that would perhaps be developed less quickly with the help of quotation. In conclusion, consciousness representation is of paramount importance for the understanding and interpretation of narrative. Readers who decide to ignore this fact may end up making the same mistake as those who were shocked by *Madame Bovary*.

6. Perception and Speech

In the introduction we briefly mentioned perception in "The Map." We asked whether the little boy who is looking at the map is the same person as the narrating agent. We suggested that the I-who-remembers is most probably the speaker, while the I-who-is-being-remembered is the one who looks at the map. A similar problem exists when the nar-

rator differs from the character, that is to say (in Cohn's words), when we are dealing with a third-person context. If a character remembers something, does that character automatically become the narrator of this memory? Or does one have to say that there is an omniscient narrator who represents the memories of a character in the form of Cohn's consonant psycho-narration? In that case the character is the perceiving agent, while the narrator remains restricted to voicing personal perceptions.

The novel *Een weekend in Oostende* (A weekend in Ostend), by the Dutch author Willem Brakman, illustrates this problem. Blok, the main character, goes to the toilet and remembers the family visits from his youth: "Once in the toilet he drew the little bolt. [. . .] Those visits were strange affairs, no streamers, no swimming pool, no tea [. . .] but gaps one helped each other through by exchanging already endlessly repeated stories. [. . .] Thus the word 'ear' was an unavoidable ticket to the story of Blok's father and his hospitalization."⁴⁹ Who says here that the visits were strange affairs? A structuralist working in the tradition of Mieke Bal and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan would, as we will see later in great detail, make a distinction between the narrator and Blok. Blok imagines the events, but he does not narrate them, as can be derived from a formulation such as "Blok's father."

Point of view:
Friedman

This distinction between the perceiving and the narrating agent is relatively new. The older so-called *point of view* tradition combined perspective with narration and thus mixed the figure who perceives with the one who narrates.⁵⁰ We wish to dwell for a moment on a classic representative of traditional point of view theory, Norman Friedman. He popularized the terms that are still often used outside the discipline of narratology, such as omniscient narrator and I-witness. The latter is symptomatic in that it proves to what extent traditional theory conflated perception (eye) with speech (I). The I-witness makes up one of the seven positions on Friedman's point of view scale, which extends from maximal diegesis to maximal mimesis.⁵¹

Seven points
of view

At the pole of diegetic summary Friedman places *editorial omniscience*, or that possessed by omniscient authorial narrators who stand above the fictional world and summarize everything in their own words. Such narrators are clearly visible and address the reader in the first person so as to show what they think about the people and things

they describe. If narrators make their presence slightly less felt, they move to the second position on the scale, which Friedman calls *neutral omniscience*. Here too readers get a clear idea of their narrators' appraisal of characters and events, but such narrators no longer speak in the first person and do not directly address the audience anymore. The sentence "She was a nice and well-educated woman" is an example of neutral omniscience. If this sentence is changed to "I can safely say that she was a nice and well-educated woman," then we have editorial omniscience.

Moving in the direction of the mimetic pole, Friedman conceives of two different I-narrators who no longer stand above the fictional world but instead belong to it, appearing as characters. Those narrators in the *I-witness* category tell the story in their own words but lack the omniscience of the authorial narrator. A well-known example of this is Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes's faithful assistant and witness to his adventures. The *I-protagonist*, on the other hand, is the typical narrator of autobiographical novels. Narrators in this category talk about themselves. The narrator of "The Map" occupies this position.

In addition, Friedman comes up with two different "character-narrators." He describes the first one with the formulation *multiple selective omniscience*. This means that the story is being told from the perspective of at least two characters, so that the reader is offered non-identical versions of the same event. These characters do not speak in the first person but rather through an inconspicuous omniscient narrator. The novel *De Geruchten* (The rumors), by Hugo Claus, nicely illustrates this position in that the events surrounding the protagonist René Catrjjsse are considered a constantly changing cast of characters.⁵² The second character-narrator occupies the position Friedman calls *selective omniscience*, which means that only a single character provides the perspective on the narrated events. In the above quoted passage from *Een weekend in Oostende*, Blok provides this perspective. "Pegasian" presents a borderline case, because it shows both the view of the riding master and that of the pupil but still devotes most of its attention to the latter.

According to Friedman, selective omniscience has no real narrator. The reader looks almost directly into the minds of the characters.⁵³ This aspect separates selective from neutral and editorial omniscience. The latter two clearly exhibit the intervention of an evaluative narrator.

However, we disagree with Friedman when he submits that it would be possible to look directly into the mind of a character without the help of a narrating agent. We would prefer to describe this method of representation as consonant psycho-narration. Like Cohn, we believe that a narrative always implies a narrating agent. Such narrators may not be visible, but they are nevertheless present.

The seventh and final position on Friedman's scale is supposed to approach pure mimesis. In this *dramatic mode* events would for the most part be shown almost without any summary or transformation. The point of view becomes that of a camera, which registers (as Friedman likes to suggest) without interfering in the action. On account of its numerous dialogues, a novel in this mode starts to resemble a play. The dramatic mode is almost always limited to parts of the text, but *JR*, by William Gaddis, with its more than six hundred pages of conversation and almost nothing else, comes close to realizing the ideal that Friedman described long before the publication of this novel. A camera can register only the outsides of people and things; interior processing thus remains unseen. According to Friedman, the dramatic mode almost completely does away with mediation, which was the basic feature of all the other positions.⁵⁴ The first two mediate by means of omniscience, the two I-narrators mediate because they tell the story, and the character-narrators mediate since they perceive and present people and events. For us, even the dramatic mode still contains a mediating agent whose minimal visibility helps to create the impression of objective, mimetic representation.

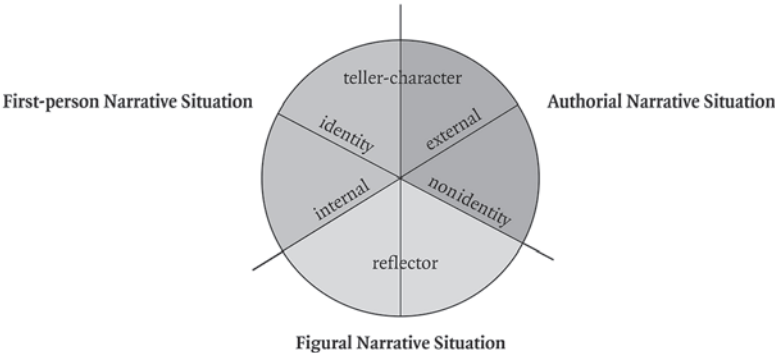
Narrative
situation:
Stanzel

Franz Stanzel's theory is somewhat reminiscent of Friedman's approach.⁵⁵ This is because Stanzel too sometimes gets into trouble as a result of combining perception and narration. He maintains, however, that every narrative implies a mediating agent, so that a completely mimetic representation of events is impossible. His concept of mediation (*Mittelbarkeit*), which includes forms of perception as well as narration, results in three basic narrative situations (*Erzählsituationen*), which evoke Friedman's editorial omniscience, his two I-narrators, and his two character-narrators. Stanzel distinguishes between the authorial narrative situation in which the narrator hovers above the story, the first-person narrative situation in which the I-figure takes the floor, and the figural narrative situation in which the narrator seems

to disappear in order to make room for centers of consciousness situated in the characters.

Stanzel describes these three situations with the help of three scales, each representing a gradual development between two poles. The first scale is the person scale, which evolves from identity to nonidentity. A narrator may or may not be identical to a character. If narrator and character coincide, then we have an I-narrative, and if they don't, a he- or she-narrative. This distinction overlaps with Cohn's separation of first-person and third-person contexts. Stanzel's second scale concerns perspective, which goes from entirely internal all the way to completely external. In the former you see the events through the eyes of a character in the story and in the latter through the eyes of an agent who stands above the fictional world, such as an authorial narrator. The final scale is that of mode, that is, Stanzel's term for the degree to which the narrator comes to the fore. This scale slides from the pole of the teller-character, where the narrator is clearly present, to its opposite, where the narrator is nearly invisible. The latter is occupied by what Stanzel calls the reflector, a character whose mind perceives the events and thus gives the reader the impression that he or she has direct access to the character's mind.

Although these three scales with their opposite poles are clearly reminiscent of the first six positions on Friedman's scale, Stanzel comes up with a different and, more importantly, a more detailed system. He combines his three scales into a circle:



Adapted from F. K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 56.

Each of the three basic narrative situations occupies one-third of the circle. The segment of the authorial situation runs from the teller-character pole on the mode scale to the pole of nonidentity on the person scale. In the middle of this segment sits the pole of external perspective, which constitutes the primary characteristic of the authorial situation since authorial narrators first and foremost stand outside the world they talk about. Secondary characteristics include the fact that the narrator is not identical to the character who is the subject of the narrative and the fact that the narrator is clearly present (as opposed to disappearing in favor of a character).

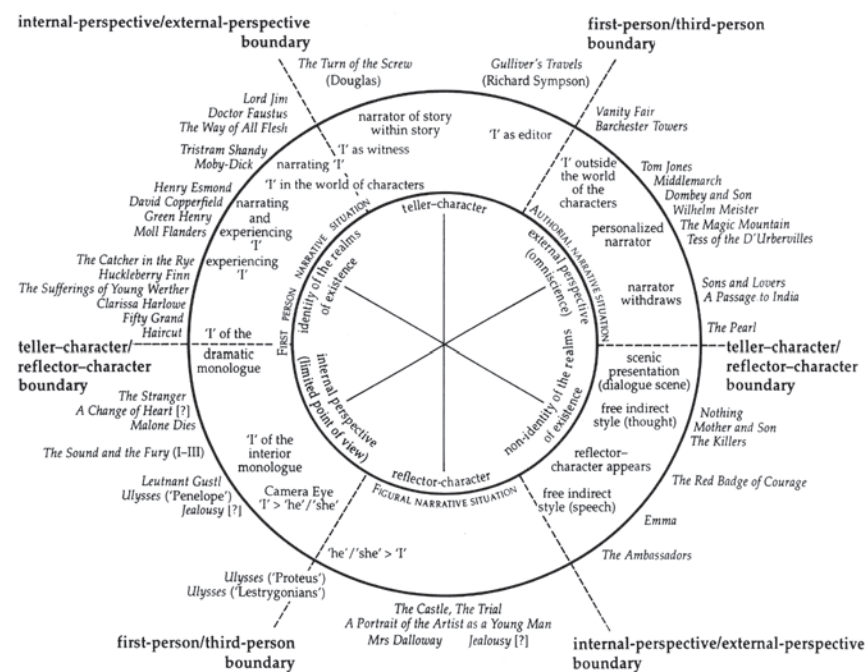
The first-person narrative situation is mainly characterized by identity since the narrator and the character who is the subject of the narrative coincide. It also features the clear presence of a narrator, as well as internal perspective, since one sees everything through the eyes of a figure who appears in the story. Finally, the figural narrative situation has as its basic characteristic the presence of a reflector rather than a teller-character. The narrator seems to have disappeared, so that everything becomes available through the reflector. This automatically means that the perspective is internal and that the narrative is told in the third person, which on the person scale implies nonidentity.

*Gradations
according
to Stanzel*

Stanzel's circular representation has the advantage that the relationships between the various methods of narration are very clear. The various methods do not exist separately; they overlap incrementally into the next grade. There are three clear cases of gradation. First, authorial narration can develop into figural narration when it crosses the junction between the identity scale and the circle, that is, when narrators who do not coincide with any of their characters yield the floor to these characters to such an extent that the narrating voice becomes indistinguishable from the characters' perceptions and ideas. This situation applies in the case of free indirect speech, which, as we know, occupies the borderline between authorial representation and character-oriented representation. Second, emphatically present authorial narrators can use the first person so regularly that they approach the border with first-person narration. No wonder it is the teller-character pole that constitutes this borderline in Stanzel's system. When first-person narrators of this type surrender every form of

authorial pretense, they restrict themselves to their own internal perspective and cross over to first-person narration. In its extreme version, this surrender results in self-quoted monologues, in which the reader sees only what goes on in the mind of the I-figure. Third, the border between first-person narration and figural narration can be transgressed when fragments of quoted monologue appear framed by descriptions of the character who delivers the monologue. We have already encountered an example of this from *Ulysses*, in which the character of Bloom switches from being a reflector in a third-person description to a speaker in the first person.

In order to map all these transitions, Stanzel has extended his circle. In the middle of each scale he has drawn a perpendicular line so that on the circle it marks the spot where one side of this scale (for example, that of the teller-character) crosses over into the other (for example, that of the reflector). Stanzel combines the three scales and their respective perpendicular lines in two concentric circles:



From Susana Onega and José Angel García Landa, *Narratology: An Introduction* (New York: Longman, 1996), 162. Used with permission.

Stanzel holds that this circle covers all possible narrative situations. All narrative texts would fit into this system. When a narrative deviates from one situation, it approaches another. The circle would also clarify a particular historical development. The reflector would barely show up until modernism appears in the early part of the twentieth century. Traditional novels would all be located in the domains of authorial and first-person narration.

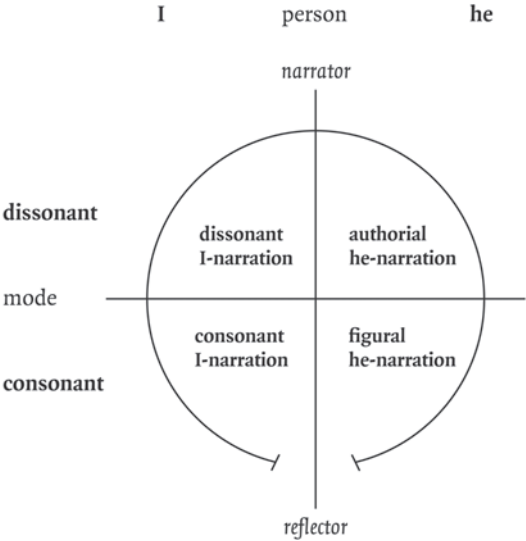
Although Stanzel's double circle is an impressive systematization, we will not follow his proposal in this handbook. As we will explain when discussing structuralism, we believe it is absolutely necessary to distinguish between the agents of speech and perception. They belong to different levels. The agent of perception is part of the story as it is told, while the agent of speech is responsible for the telling. In spatial terms this distinction would result in different layers that Stanzel's circle cannot accommodate. His circle is a flat plane that does not distinguish between perceiving and talking but instead considers both as forms of mediation.

This circle is one-dimensional in other respects as well. It deals only with narrative situations and does not say anything about a great many essential aspects of narrative and narratology. What about the manipulation of time? Or what about the difference between summary and scene? How do events connect to become a plot? All these questions are taken up in great detail by structuralist narratology, but they fall outside the scope of Stanzel's circle.

*Cohn on
Stanzel's mode
and perspective*

In an important discussion of Stanzel's system, Dorrit Cohn suggests that the difference between the scales of mode and perspective is untenable.⁵⁶ She suggests that an internal perspective inevitably means you are looking into or from the mind of a character, and it therefore implies the reflector mode. An external perspective means equally inevitably that events are represented by an agent who stands outside and above the characters and therefore occupies a place on the teller-character side of the mode scale. The perspective scale is redundant since it coincides with that of mode. That leaves us with two scales—the one related to person, which distinguishes between I and he or she, and the one for mode, which distinguishes between narrator and reflector. Cohn holds that a teller-character shows through as soon as you see the difference between the speaking agent and the character who is

the subject of the agent's speech—or, to put it in her terms, when there is dissonance. To her the reflector illustrates consonance since in that case the narrator becomes so absorbed in the thoughts and feelings of the character that the two figures seem to coincide. To sum up, Cohn simplifies Stanzel and incorporates his view on mode into her theoretical frame of consonance and dissonance. Her circle looks like this:



Adapted from
Dorrit Cohn, “The
Encirclement of
Narrative: On Franz
Stanzel’s *Theorie des
Erzählens*,” *Poetics
Today* 2, no. 2 (1981):
157–82.

Cohn further believes that there can be no gradual or inconspicuous transition between figural narration in the third person and consonant first-person narration. According to her, the example from *Ulysses* does not show that one method of narration develops into the other but that the two differ significantly. Here is the passage again: “He stood at Fleet street crossing. Luncheon interval. A sixpenny at Rowe’s? Must look up that ad in the national library. An eightpenny in the Burton. Better. On my way.” The reader will notice that the third-person narrator of the first sentence is suddenly replaced by an I-narrator. The distinction between I and he is therefore not canceled at all. Instead of a vague shift, the passage shows abrupt change, while Stanzel maintains that one form imperceptibly changes into the other. Cohn therefore leaves a gap on the circle between consonant first-person narration and figural third-person narration.

Although Stanzel has a lot of praise for Cohn's criticism, he rejects this gap.⁵⁷ Stanzel would read the Joyce example differently. For him, its second and third sentences ("Luncheon interval. A sixpenny at Rowe's?") do not allow the reader to decide whether they belong to the first-person narrator or the third-person narrator. In general there are only two indications from which to conclude who is talking: the explicit use of "I" or "s/he," and the tense of the verb (past in the case of the third person, present in the case of the first). Sentences without an indication of the person and without a verb therefore float between "I" and "s/he," so that one cannot speak of a rift or an abrupt transition. Here is another example: "His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right."⁵⁸ The passage begins and ends with a third-person narrator, while the other Joyce passage started in the third person and ended in the first. Between beginning and end, both passages feature similar brief sentences without a verb or any indication of the person. If you interpret these snippets on the basis of the passage's last sentence, you would probably read "Lunchbreak" in the first passage as an example of first-person narration, while you would probably consider "To the right. Museum," in the second, as an example of third-person narration. There are no clear borders or sudden rifts here, Stanzel would say, and he holds on to the continuation of the circumference at the bottom of the circle.

Cohn and Stanzel agree that gradation is definitely possible at the top of the circle, where the authorial narrator changes into the first-person narrator. A visible authorial narrator speaks and does so in the first person. The remnants of his authorial status shine through in the dissonant I-narrator who, just like an authorial narrator, belongs to a world different from that of the characters.

The six topics we have dealt with in this chapter all result in a binary relation, which often comes down to an opposition: story and plot, showing and telling, author and narrator, narrator and reader, consciousness and representation, and perception and speech. In structuralism, which we will address in the next chapter, these six individual topics are combined into an encompassing and hierarchical system. This can be seen as substantial progress since it transposes the various aspects of narrative analysis into a unified whole. In the structuralist

system some binary oppositions are qualified and developed, so that they sometimes turn into three-part relations. Thus the connection between story and plot will be extended to the three basic levels of structuralist narratology: story, narrative, and narration. This too is an improvement since we have often had to establish that dual oppositions do not answer to the complexity of a concrete narrative text. As we will see, the structuralist approach tries to accommodate this complexity.

CHAPTER 2

Structuralism

Contemporary narratology finds its roots in the work of the French structuralists. Issue number 8 of the journal *Communications* usually figures as the official starting point of the discipline. This issue, which came out in 1966, contained nine articles with proposals for concepts and methods that could be used to study narrative texts. Some of these articles have acquired stature as classics. This certainly holds for the plot analysis proposed by Roland Barthes, which we will discuss shortly, but other contributions, by A. J. Greimas, Claude Bremond, Umberto Eco, Gérard Genette, and Tzvetan Todorov, have remained important as well.¹ In his *Grammaire du Décaméron* (Grammar of the Decameron) published three years later, Todorov introduced the term “narratology”: “We wish to develop a theory of narration here [. . .]. As a result, this book does not so much belong to literary studies as to a discipline that does not yet exist, let us say narratology, the science of narrative.”² The French structuralists recognize the Russian formalists as precursors of this scientific discipline. Vladimir Propp’s analysis of fairy tales can be seen as an embryonic example of structuralist narratology.³

*Division
into levels*

The structuralist distinction between the text as it appears and its underlying patterns also stems from the formalists. As we will see, these Russian literary theorists made a distinction between the abstract chronology of events and their concrete sequence in a narrative text where they often do not proceed in chronological order. Structuralism is characterized by the gap between surface and deep levels. In the collection *Qu’est-ce que le structuralisme?* (What is structuralism?) Todorov explains that structuralism does not deal with the literary text as it presents itself to the reader but rather with a deep, abstract structure.⁴ The science of narratology, rather than investigating the surface, should study that which is fundamental to narrative.

This approach has led to the division of the narrative text into three levels. Genette describes the surface level with the term *narration*—the same in the French original and in our English translation—which comes down to the formulation of the story.⁵ Narration refers to the concrete and directly visible way in which a story is told. Word choice, sentence length, and narrating agent are all elements that belong to this level. Genette situates the second level slightly under the surface and calls it *récit* in French, which we will translate as *narrative* in English. Narrative is concerned with the story as it plays out in the text. Whereas linguistic formulation was central to narration, the organization of narrative elements is central to narrative. Narrative does not concern the act of narration but rather the way in which the events and characters of the story are offered to the reader. For instance, a novel starts with the death of the male protagonist and then looks back to his first marriage from the vantage point of his son, after which it looks forward to the end of that marriage from the perspective of his second wife. So the level of narrative has to do with organizational principles such as (a)chronology and perspective.

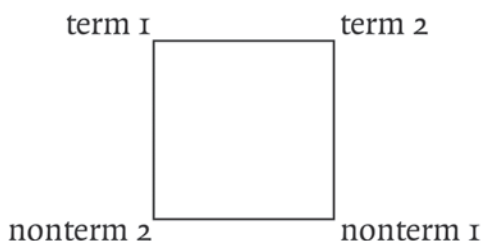
Genette's final and deepest level is *histoire*, which we translate as *story*, not least because its most concrete form coincides with E. M. Forster's concept of story—the chronological sequence of events—as we have presented it in chapter 1 of this handbook. This level is not readily available to the reader. Instead it amounts to an abstract construct. On this level, narrative elements are reduced to a chronological series. The story of the example above would start with mention of the man's first marriage, then the end of that marriage, and finally the man's death. Here the protagonist does not appear as a concrete character but as a role in an abstract system. The setting is reduced on this level to abstract characteristics such as high or low and light or dark.

There has been endless discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. We limit ourselves to a few remarks that will be useful for the rest of this book. First, structuralist narratology deals with the concrete text only via an abstract detour, notably the construction of a so-called deep structure that ideally remains so abstract that it consists only of symbolic and formal elements. The narratologist's ideal was the concept of a distinctive feature in phonology.

*Problems with
the division*

Such a feature does not have a meaning of its own, but it causes differences of meaning. The contrast between voiced and voiceless is a distinctive feature. For instance, phoneme /b/ is voiced and /p/ is voiceless. In itself the difference does not mean anything, but it does result in the difference between “bath” and “path,” for example. Narratology never reaches such an abstract and exclusively formal level. All the elements structuralists isolate in the story as formal components of deep structure invariably carry meaning that destroys their dreams of an absolute formality.

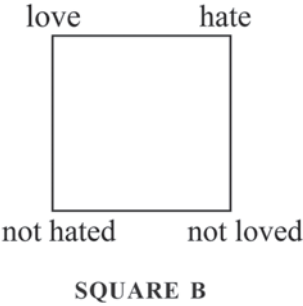
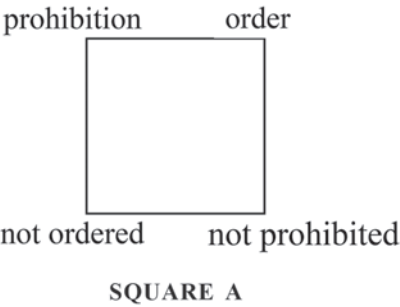
Second, deep structure in principle has to be as universal as possible, but in practice it differs from structuralist to structuralist. The deep structure proposed by Barthes is different from Todorov’s, but it also differs from those of Bremond and Greimas. In devising a deep structure one can apparently settle for different levels of abstraction. In its least abstract form, the story is the chronological sequence of events, but try to go any further and difficulties abound. Greimas’s semiotic square is far more abstract than Barthes’s narrative grammar. Greimas reduces a narrative text—and sometimes even an entire oeuvre—to four terms he combines in a square, which in its schematic form looks like this:



Adapted from A. J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale: Recherche de méthode* (Paris: Larousse, 1966), 180.

Greimas calls the relation between terms 1 and 2 one of contraries, such as life versus death. Between term 1 and nonterm 1 (or term 2 and nonterm 2) there is a relation of contradiction. For instance, the combination of life and nonlife is contradictory. The connection between term 1 and nonterm 2 (or between term 2 and nonterm 1)

Greimas describes as one of implication. Life implies nondeath, and death implies nonlife.⁶ One could reduce narrative texts to a number of squares and explain textual development as a combination of these squares and their terms. Here is a stock example: a girl is in love with a poor man but has to marry a rich one whom she hates. This situation implies at least two squares: one (A) in which term 1 is prohibition and term 2, order, and another (B), in which term 1 is love and term 2, hate.



The initial situation combines prohibition (A term 1) with love (B term 1), and order (A term 2) with hate (B term 2). If, as a result of various adventures, the girl is allowed to marry the man she loves after all, the story develops into a combination of nonprohibition (A non-term 1) with love (B term 1), and of nonorder (A nonterm 2) with hate (B term 2). All stages between beginning and end can be described as a

combination of certain terms in certain squares. This approach resembles the reduction of a movie to a set of slides. If one applies such a reduction to an entire oeuvre—which then appears as a single square—a number of essential aspects will inevitably be lost.⁷

Barthes counters Greimas's abstract and static square with a dynamic sequence of functions that connect more closely to the order and development of events in the actual text. When later in this book we try to systematize events and actions in our discussion of story, we rely on Barthes's system because it is more concrete and dynamic than Greimas's. However, we conclude that discussion with the remark that our choice does not reflect *the* structuralist treatment of events in the narrative text. There are as many opinions on this subject as there are structuralists.

This variety of deep structures points to a third problem related to this issue: How does one arrive at a particular deep structure? Here too the structuralists fail to come up with an answer. There are no clear discovery procedures.⁸ Instead of being based on actual texts, deep structures are simply posited.⁹ There is a considerable risk that texts will be manipulated until they fit the model. In other words, the model sometimes takes precedence over the concrete text, and the theory becomes more concerned with itself than with the literary works it supposedly investigates.

*Narratology
and geology*

It seems as if structuralist narratology, with its division of narrative texts into three layers, adopts a geological model. Critics of structuralism have called this treatment of the text a form of "spatialization." They have two basic reproaches with regard to this procedure. To begin with, spatialization underestimates the importance of time. A narrative text unfolds in time not only when it comes to its events but also when it comes to the act of reading, which always takes up a certain amount of time. Structuralist narratology represents a narrative text by way of schemata and drawings that are sometimes reminiscent of geometry. Textual elements are literally and figuratively mapped. The resulting map provides a static and general view that does not do justice to the dynamics of the concrete and sometimes quite chaotic process of reading. Second, the structuralists tend to focus on the lines of separation between the three layers, so gradual transitions are often overlooked. In their search for the differ-

ences and gaps between the levels, they fail to appreciate gradations and similarities.¹⁰

These points of criticism do not detract from the fact that structuralist narratology is the first large-scale attempt to combine all aspects of narrative analysis in a convenient system. The model resulting from the combination of the three levels allows a reader to link all the central aspects of a narrative text. One can see, for instance, how characterization connects with the setting or the method of narration and the perspective from which events are perceived. This leads to congruities that not only offer better insight into the formal organization of the text but also enable the reader to join content and form. Encompassing structuration is and remains structuralism’s major merit since it clarifies both textual content and form. That is why this particular brand of narratology continues to provide an indispensable legacy even to those readers whose main interest lies in later approaches.

*Advantages
of the model*

We will elucidate the three levels of the narrative text with reference to three important structuralist narratologists: Gérard Genette, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, and Mieke Bal.¹¹ Unfortunately, these critics do not use the same terms for the levels. In order to avoid confusion, we combine all the terms in a figure, whose left column contains the concepts we will favor in this handbook. From our choice one will notice that we no longer use the term “plot,” which we provisionally worked with in chapter 1 when discussing E. M. Forster. While the emphasis of the term “plot” seems to be on what we call narrative, its meaning spills over into our preferred term, “narration.”

	Genette	Rimmon-Kenan	Bal
story	histoire	story	fabula
narrative	récit	text	story
narration	narration	narration	text

1. Story

Just like any deep structure, the story is an abstract construct that the reader has to derive from the concrete text. The diagram below shows that the story consists of three aspects that will be discussed separate-

ly but that in fact always intermingle. In the course of the discussion, the terms in the figure will gradually become clear.

Actions/Events	– functions	<input type="checkbox"/> cardinal
		<input type="checkbox"/> catalyzer
	– indexes	<input type="checkbox"/> pure
		<input type="checkbox"/> informative
	– combinations	<input type="checkbox"/> arbitrary = pure + informative
		<input type="checkbox"/> implication = catalyzer + cardinal
		<input type="checkbox"/> mutual implication = cardinal + cardinal
		↓ sequence
		↓ embedding, . . .
Actants	– subject/object	
	– sender/receiver	
	– helper/opponent	
Setting	– chronotype vs. topographical structure	
	– as an index connected to actant and action	
	– bipolar scales and boundaries	

1.1. Events

The story is an abstract level. In the first place it refers to the chronological sequence of events that are often no longer shown chronologically in the narrative. The Russian formalists used the term *fabula* for this chronological sequence (story) and *syuzhet* for the specific way in which it was presented in the text.¹² Thus, the *syuzhet* covers both narrative and narration in our terminology.

Several proposals have been made to order events on this abstract level. The Russian formalists consider the motif to be the story's most basic component. So-called bound motifs are indispensable for the *fabula*, while unbound motifs are far from essential. A murder, for instance, is a bound motif, while the road an assassin travels to shoot a targeted victim may well be considered an unbound motif since it is not crucial. The assassin's clothing and age are unbound as well. Unbound motifs may be important on the level of the *syuzhet*, but they are not on the level of the *fabula*. Digressions about the killer's clothing, age, and psychology are important for suspense, but they are unimportant for the development of the action. Formalists also distinguish between static and dynamic motifs. The latter change the progress of events, while the former do not. Bound motifs are usually dynamic and un-

bound motifs most often static, but this is not a rule. In principle the description of a character's mental makeup constitutes an unbound motif, but this makeup may result in certain actions that give a decisive twist to the course of events. A murder is usually a bound motif, but if it does not bring about any change, it turns out to be static after all.¹³

Roland Barthes has refined these distinctions in his "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives."¹⁴ He distinguishes functions and indexes. Functions are elements whose interrelatedness is responsible for the horizontal progress of events, that is, their linear development. The relationship between these elements can take many forms, of which temporality, causality, and opposition are the most common. "X buys a gun" is a function that leads to "X uses the gun to kill Y." The function "X is in love with Y" is opposed to "Y hates X," and the tension between these two functions brings about a development in the story. Functions belong to what Roman Jakobson calls a syntagm, which is a horizontal sequence of contiguous elements. Elements are contiguous if their relationship comes down to a direct connection between terms such as "part" and "whole," "cause" and "effect," "producer" and "product," "pole" and "opposite." The link between buying the gun and using it is one between intention and execution. The killer buys the gun in order to use it. Jakobson calls these contiguous relations metonymical.¹⁵

Functions

Indexes, on the other hand, do not bring about the horizontal progress of events. They refer to a different plane, which means they function vertically. The many telephones on James Bond's desk in the stories from the 1960s amount to an index of his importance. As a character he belongs to a different plane from the telephones, but he does get extra weight thanks to these instruments. The connection between the two planes could be called symbolic since the telephones symbolize Bond's importance. The set of telephones reflects Bond's busy life. In musical terms one could compare functions to melody and indexes to harmony or counterpoint. Melody derives from the horizontal progress of the score, while counterpoint arises from vertical accumulation.

Indexes

Barthes distinguishes between two kinds of functions. A cardinal function implies a risk, which means it harbors a choice or a possibility. A question provides a minimal example of this type of function since asking a question leaves open the possibility of ignoring it. When

*Cardinal
functions*

Catalyzer

the telephone rings, it may or may not be answered. More generally, almost all crucial events of the story belong to this category. An assassination attempt is a cardinal function and includes the possibility of failure. Narrative suspense largely rests on the risk central to this type of function. The second type of function described by Barthes is the catalyzer, which does not involve a risk but instead merely assures the continuation of what the cardinal function has started. When the telephone rings and Bond is in the room, he can walk to the telephone, let it ring for a few moments, and then pick it up. All the movements between the moment the telephone rings and the moment he picks it up are catalyzers, but the ringing and the answering remain cardinal to the whole sequence.

Pure index

*Informative
index*

For the indexes Barthes offers a twofold division as well. A pure index is an element the reader must interpret. Bond's clothing, his taste, and his preference for certain drinks are all interpreted by the reader as symbols of Bond's sophistication and virility. Next there is the informative index, which is mainly important for spatiotemporal description and which does not require symbolic interpretation or the solution of a mystery. "It was seven forty-five and it was raining" makes up an informative index. Obviously this type may turn out to be a pure index when for instance the time indication enables the reader to accept or reject the suspect's alibi.

Combinations

A structure implies elements in a specific relationship to each other. In the present case the elements are the functions and the indexes, and the relations between them generally fall into three types. The combination of pure and informative indexes is arbitrary. In a self-portrait, for instance, direct information about age and place of birth will appear side by side with suggestive indexes the reader must interpret as indications of character. The relation between cardinal functions and catalyzers is that of implication. The catalyzer completes the cardinal function and is therefore implied by it. Finally, two or more cardinal functions have a relation of mutual implication, since one cannot do without the other. A murder cannot do without a murder weapon and vice versa: the gun is not a murder weapon without the actual murder.

For Barthes the combination of cardinal functions leads to sequences. They are independent units whose opening action has no precursor and whose conclusion has no effect. Seduction is a sequence. It starts

with certain tactical moves and then results in success or failure, after which it is over. Sequences can in their turn be combined, for instance through embedding. Sequence A (seduction) can contain a sequence B (such as a story about the heroic deeds of the seducer) that may or may not lead to the successful completion of A. The insertion of B literally causes suspense because it temporarily suspends the continuation of A.

Here is how Barthes systematizes story events: he starts from minimal components such as functions and indexes, proceeds to create minimal relationships between these components (arbitrariness, implication, mutual implication), and so arrives at larger units in the story, such as sequences and their combinations.

It goes without saying that such a system works best with narrative texts in which many things happen. No wonder then that Barthes refers to James Bond. Bond stories contain clear sequences like “the murder,” “the hero is summoned,” “the hero starts an investigation,” and “the hero solves the murder.” In order to illustrate Barthes’s theory, we will analyze the story “From a View to a Kill,” which has a very clear sequence chronology.¹⁶ The syuzhet hardly deviates from the fabula because the presentation of events in the text closely approximates the story chronology. Only when Bond is keeping watch over a suspicious location in the woods does a short flashback briefly disturb the chronology. According to the Russian formalists, such a minimal difference between the abstract story and the concrete presentation of events is typical of nonliterary texts or of texts that hardly merit the literary label.

James Bond

The Bond story starts with a murder sequence. An agent of the British secret service is driving his motorbike on a road through the woods. His mission is to deliver secret documents, but he gets shot by a man who has disguised himself so that he can approach the agent without being suspected. The killer then covers the traces of the murder as best as he can. This sequence can be divided into three cardinal functions: the pursuit, the shot, and the cover-up. There are many indexes. An attentive reader knows from the first few lines that the killer on the motorbike is not a positive character. He has eyes “cold as flint,” “a square grin,” and “big tombstone teeth.” His face has “set into blunt, hard, perhaps Slav lines.”¹⁷ A Bond reader will interpret these descriptions as characteristics of a criminal, probably from the Soviet Union.

The mention of the time and place of the murder—seven in the morning in May, somewhere near Paris—constitutes an informative index.

By identifying functions and indexes, one can get a better understanding of each sequence. The second sequence, for example, could go under the heading “the hero is summoned.” A beautiful girl snatches Bond away from a sidewalk café and tells him about the murder. In this sequence there are more indexes than cardinal functions because information is more important than action. In the third sequence Bond is briefed at the headquarters of Station F. This briefing rounds off the first sequence, since Bond (as well as the reader) gets to hear what came of the cover-up. The remaining suspense of the first sequence is now totally gone. The briefing is followed by the first investigation at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), where staff are less than cooperative. Bond nevertheless manages to formulate a hypothesis, which amounts to the cardinal function of this fourth sequence—“the hero’s first investigation.” Bond tests his hypothesis in “the hero’s second investigation,” sequence number five, in which he observes in the woods the secret hideout where the killer and his two accomplices are holed up. Obviously the hero’s hypothesis proves to be correct. In the sixth sequence Bond devises a plan to apprehend the criminals, which he carries out in the seventh and final sequence. This sequence perfectly mirrors the first. Bond has taken the place of the agent on the motorbike, and now he is being shot at just like the agent in the beginning. He tricks the killer and clears the secret hideout, after which he explores his interest in the beautiful girl.

Advantages

Such a systematization of events offers a number of advantages. First, it provides an overview of the various links between the sequences. The seventh sequence mirrors the first, the third one concludes the first, and the fifth one confirms the hypothesis of the fourth. The ways in which this story builds suspense thus become clear. This method also enhances the reader’s understanding of numerous details that become more meaningful when seen as a pure or informative index. Elements that might have seemed irrelevant in a superficial reading now acquire the importance they deserve, owing to this more searching analysis. For instance, it cannot be a coincidence that the murder is committed on a road through the woods where the criminals are hiding. As we will see in our discussion of the setting, criminals are constantly as-

sociated with nature, whereas the hero appears affiliated with culture, the city, and sophistication in general.

Barthes's systematization becomes more difficult and less relevant for stories with few events. In "Pegasian," for instance, sequences are difficult to distinguish. One could see the horse-riding lesson as the first sequence and the text's lesson ("As long as you take off") as the second. The cardinal function for the first sequence could be condensed as "dressage." In this view indexes would be made up of all symbols of drill and submission, such as the "real pair of riding breeches" and the "background information" that would teach the pupil respect and politeness. The fact that one of the crucial indexes has to do with a pair of pants could then be seen as the symbolic combination of "dressage" and "dress" (in the meaning of clothing in general). This may indeed appear somewhat far-fetched, but obviously any systematization by the reader will have something arbitrary. There is no cogent method one can simply apply in order to arrive at the deep structure of events. The reader has an important role. The Bond story could be divided into three sequences or thirty sequences. Rather than fixed elements that can be abstracted from the text, structures are constructs that are always partly dependent on the reader.

Disadvantages

The choice for Barthes's system has something arbitrary as well, since many other options are available. For instance, rudimentary systematizations of story events can be found in Propp, who has developed thirty-one functions in his analysis of Russian fairy tales.¹⁸ The same goes for Eco, who has distinguished nine crucial moves in a typical Bond novel.¹⁹ Todorov claims that "the minimal complete plot consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another. An 'ideal' narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical."²⁰ The relatively linear or even deterministic sequence of these functions, moves, or (dis)orders appears only at the level of deep structure. In a concrete fairy tale or Bond novel, that system will mutate in various ways. The same holds for Greimas's four action phases, consisting of manipulation, competence, performance, and sanction. These phases may also intertwine, thereby reducing the linearity of the narrative evolution.²¹

Other views

Less linear is Claude Bremond's systematization. He starts from so-called pivotal functions, which always leave open the possibility of success or failure. Barthes's sequence becomes a succession of three pivotal functions in Bremond. First there is possibility, which is followed by realization, and finally there is completion.²² For instance, a woman can devise a plan to kill her husband in order to inherit his wealth. The murder sequence starts with the possibility of carrying out the plan or not. If it is carried out, then the murder attempt may be successful or it may fail. If the murder proceeds as planned, then the woman may or may not inherit the money. Like Propp and Eco, Bremond envisages various transformations taking place between the relatively simple three-function structure and the often complicated developments in a concrete narrative text.

We have opted for Barthes's system because it is far less hampered by such a complex series of transformations and because it does not start from frameworks as rigid as those offered by his colleagues. Barthes's indexes, functions, and sequences are open concepts that the reader has to fill out with elements from the text. They do not impose a rigid order or interpretation. If, however, the reader's processing gets a central place in the analysis, one moves away from the classical, structuralist action grammar. An example of such a readerly transformation of structuralist concepts can be found in the work of Emma Kafalenos. Building on the work of Propp, Greimas, and Todorov, she develops a model with ten functions.²³ She studies them in terms of the concrete narrative (con)text and of the reader's activities: "I use functions [. . .] to record readers' interpretations as they develop and change (or fail to change) during the process of reading."²⁴

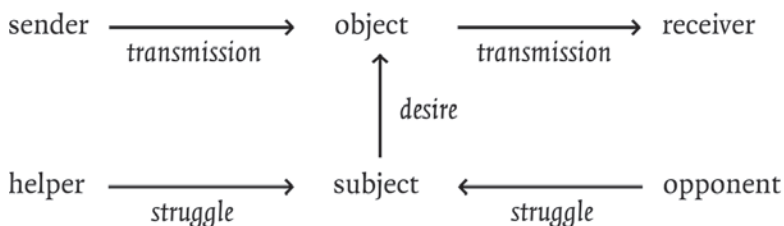
1.2. *Actants*

Events cannot be independent of the agents who are involved in them. We describe these agents with the term "figures," which we will soon specify as *actants*, following Greimas. The term does not refer to the actual manifestation of a character in the text but rather to the specific role a character plays as an abstract agent in a network of roles on the level of the story. Here too every structuralist has developed his or her own networks and systematizations. Bremond, for instance, conceives

of two fundamental roles: a passive one and an active one. Active figures steer and direct events, even though they often do not consciously develop a strategy. A prime example of such a figure is again James Bond. Passive figures such as the agent who is killed at the beginning of “From a View to a Kill” undergo events. On top of this, there are three criteria for going into the details of figure characterization: influence, modification, and conservation. Influence typifies figures—such as a seducer or an informant—who purposefully make a direct impact on the course of events. Modification marks figures who improve or aggravate the situation, while conservation distinguishes those who try to avert change.²⁵ This explanation of Bremond’s criteria consistently presents the figure as an active agent, but obviously there are also passive figures who are influenced, modified, or stopped in their effort toward change. The same character can be both active and passive, depending on the viewpoint. The female rider in “Pegasian” actively wants to improve her situation, but she is “passively” helped by the riding master, who at first seems to hinder her.

Greimas’s actantial model is better known than Bremond’s systematization of roles.²⁶ In its simplest and most useful version, this model consists of six roles or actants. These terms are synonymous with “figures.” There is a subject, who carries out the action and who strives for a specific object. This quest is inspired and provoked by a *destinateur*, whom we will call “sender” following Cok van der Voort.²⁷ Greimas calls the agent who benefits from the quest the *destinataire*, which Van der Voort translates as the “receiver.” The agent who assists in the quest is the helper, while the agent who thwarts it is the opponent. This results in the following system:

A. J. Greimas



Adapted from A. J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale: Recherche de méthode* (Paris: Larousse, 1966), 180.

The italicized terms indicate the abstract relations between the actants: the subject strives for the object (desire), the sender wants the subject to transmit the object to the receiver, and the opponent and helper are involved in a struggle.

These are all abstract roles that should not be confused with actual characters. One character may play all the roles. In the case of a man who wants to quit smoking, one could say the subject is the smoker and his object, quitting. The sender is also the smoker—he himself wants to stop, he himself thinks it is necessary. The receiver is the smoker as well—he will benefit from giving up. The smoker’s willpower is the helper, and his old addiction amounts to the opponent. This example shows that roles do not have to be played by real characters. In addition, an emotion, a motivation, or an idea can function as an actant, when any of those performs, for example, as the sender.

Just as one character can play all the roles, one role can be played by many characters. Bond can get help from people such as the beautiful girl or the man from intelligence, but his helpers can also be state-of-the-art weapons or even more abstract things, such as his courage or resourcefulness.

Advantages This story structure has the advantage of being simple and generally applicable. It can literally be applied to every narrative text. For instance, the Marxist philosophy of history can be represented with the terms offered by Greimas. Its subject is humanity and its object, a classless society. History is the sender and humanity (or at least the proletariat), the receiver. The proletariat is the helper as well, whereas capitalists play the role of the opponent. In the case of “Pegasian” the female rider is the subject, and the story’s object is being able to fly. The horse—more specifically perhaps the winged horse Pegasus, the symbol of the muse linked to poetry—plays the role of the helper. Dressage and the riding master at first seem to act as opponents, but eventually they turn out to be helpers as well. The sender is the desire to overcome gravity, while the receiver is the girl and, on a larger plane, perhaps also the reader who understands the moral lesson.

Disadvantages Simplicity and general applicability are at the same time the model’s disadvantages. It seems just too easy to reduce all characters and motivations to six roles. If the role of the sender can comprise such diverse elements as a motive, an onset, a character who obliges or invites,

and an order or a law, then one might ask whether it would perhaps be useful to specify the category of the sender somewhat further or even to divide it into a set of subcategories. The general applicability of the model also means that it lumps all kinds of narrative texts together and treats them indiscriminately, whether it is the Marxist philosophy of history, the story of the man who wants to give up smoking, or the story of the female rider who wants to learn how to fly.

Furthermore, Greimas does not offer an easy method to go from the actual narrative text to the actantial model. Different readers will come up with different actantial structures for the same story. In “Pegasian” the riding master could also become the subject, in which case the object would be the teaching of the necessary discipline. The sender would then be the riding master or, more generally, the demands of horsemanship. The female rider in this view is still the receiver, but she also acts as the opponent. Finally, the helper is the horse, which lets itself be trained. Complex texts with many events risk the development of totally diverging actantial models. Readers who appoint the murderer as the subject of a detective novel will obviously come up with a different model from those who choose the detective for this role.

Extensive narrative texts often complicate the application of the model. Does one need to devise one model for the entire text or one for every chapter? Or maybe one for every sequence or for an even smaller unit? If each of the seven sequences of “From a View to a Kill” is analyzed according to the actantial model, then it becomes clear that James Bond does not act as the subject in the first three sequences. He is absent from the murder sequence. In the second sequence (“the hero is summoned”) he functions as the object. In the third sequence (“the hero is briefed”) he acts as the receiver since he acquires the information. It is only in the fourth sequence that he becomes an active heroic subject, thereby finally assuming the role one would expect of him. This abstract order shows how the main character is first announced and then patiently put together: he goes from absence to object, from object to receiver, and eventually from receiver to hero. Greimas permits the discovery of a structural principle that might otherwise remain unnoticed.

In this way the systematization of actants, just like the systematization of the story’s actions, assures a better understanding of the mac-

*Action and
events*

ro- and microstructures of a narrative text. Actions and events differ from one another on the basis of actant involvement. An action derives from an actant, while an event happens to the actant. In naturalist novels events usually take precedence over actions. Human beings find it hard to resist the events that befall them. However, this contrast between actions and events does not amount to a fundamental distinction, since the actantial model allows for the interpretation of events as actions by abstract actants such as fate, death, old age, or social class. In this way both actions and events can be made to fit the actantial model.

This fact points to the interdependence of actions and actants. The reader will expect certain actions from a specific actant. Very often these expectations are linked to stereotypes circulating in the reader's social and cultural context.²⁸ By playing with a reader's anticipations, a narrative text can create suspense and take surprising turns. At the beginning of a detective novel the reader might think that a given character is a helper, but the character's actions might slowly lead to the suspicion that this individual could be an opponent. Conversely, the confirmation of expectations creates a certain predictability that some readers take as a guarantee of reliability. Certain deeds are expected of heroes. If they do not deliver, they will not be considered real heroes, and in that sense they are unreliable characters. One does not expect the same feats from an octogenarian as one expects from a hero like James Bond.

Actant and
character

Forster: flat
and round
characters

If we connect the actant to both its actions and its depth, then we are moving from abstract role to concrete character. Traditionally there exists an inversely proportional relationship between the amount of action and the degree to which a figure is psychologically developed into a many-sided character. The more action there is, the less profound the character. This rule may not always apply, but it certainly holds true for traditional genres such as the adventure novel and the detective novel.²⁹ Profundity is defined by the number of character traits and their variation. Forster has made the traditional distinction between, on the one hand, static, one-dimensional *flat* characters and, on the other, variable, many-sided *round* characters.³⁰ This distinction is quite problematic. Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* has many aspects, but he does not really develop. An allegorical character such as Everyman (from the eponymous medieval morality play) is notably flat, but he does develop.

Rimmon-Kenan proposes to determine the richness of a character with the help of three sliding scales, which together make a three-dimensional coordinate system.³¹ The first scale indicates complexity and goes from a single characteristic on the one pole to an infinite range of characteristics on the other. The second scale, which deals with development, runs from the pole of stagnation to that of infinite change. The third scale indicates the degree to which the text shows the character's inner life. At the left end of this scale Rimmon-Kenan situates characters seen only from the outside, while at the other end she places characters whose inner lives are described with great attention to detail. In a psychological novel, many characters will presumably occupy positions close to the right-hand end of the scales (numerous characteristics, significant development, and an insistence on inner life), while in an action-packed story, like the one about James Bond, most characters will appear closer to the left-hand end. In "The Map" the I-character is not very complex, as few of his features are mentioned. On the other hand, there is considerable development since the young I who believes in the magic of mapping evolves into an older I who has practically no illusions left on this score. Of the two types of I, the reader sees mainly the interior.

Such a three-dimensional characterization of role makes the transition from a deep, abstract level to the level of visible characters in the concrete narrative text. Seymour Chatman describes the role as the "syntagmatic reading" of a figure since the latter functions as an element in a horizontal chain of actions, a position in a network of connecting events. The paradigmatic reading considers the figure as a set of traits, a vertical stack of indexes referring to a personality and therefore to a concretely drawn character.³² If one does not see the female rider in "Pegasian" as merely the abstract role of a subject reaching for an object (notably "taking off"), then one shifts to the more concrete level of characterization, at which she will be described with adjectives such as "playful," "disrespectful," and "relativizing."

1.3. Setting

There is more to the story than actions and actants. Events take place not only in conjunction with certain roles but also in a specific time and place. Such a spatiotemporal indication is often described with

the term *setting*. The Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin prefers to speak of a *chronotope*, a textual combination of time (chronos) and place (topos).³³ According to him, the spatiotemporal setting constitutes the narrative and ideological center of the text because it shapes figures and actions. Abstract themes like love and betrayal acquire a concrete form within and thanks to a specific chronotope. The Greek romance, for instance, features what Bakhtin calls “adventure time,” which requires “an abstract expanse of space” for the genre’s typical abductions, escapes, and pursuits to take place.³⁴ An abstract view of humankind and social reality can be concretized only if figures (humankind) and events (reality) are embedded in the chronotope.³⁵ The heroes of Greek romance thus roam the space that is available to them. Insofar as the text embodies a worldview, it contains an ideological dimension, which we will elaborate in chapter 3.

As the example of the Greek romance already indicates, Bakhtin proposes that every genre and every type of discourse develops its own chronotopes.³⁶ His other examples include the picaresque novel, which centers on “a road that winds through one’s native territory,” and the idyll, which is determined by “the immanent unity of folkloric time.”³⁷ However, one could also think of the Gothic novel with its combination of the haunted house and events often taking place at night. If Bakhtin is right, the story’s credibility rests to a large degree on the interaction between actions/events, actants, and setting.

*Setting and
actions*

Actions cannot be separated from the setting. An account of a chase requires the description of the scenery as it rapidly passes. Moreover, the setting often amounts to an index for the action. In the story discussed earlier, it is no coincidence that James Bond unmasks the killer in the same environment where that very killer used a disguise to shoot an agent. Although the road through the woods is not a highway, as an index it refers to culture, while the woods themselves are part of nature. Once Bond has shot the killer on this road and removed his accomplices from the woods, nature has resumed its innocence and attraction. The final scene takes place in the woods. Bond talks to the beautiful girl, and his words show that nature has traded its connotations of terror for those of eroticism: “Bond took the girl by the arm. He said: ‘Come over here. I want to show you a bird’s nest.’ ‘Is that an order?’ ‘Yes.’”³⁸

This example proves that the setting can also function as an index for the actants. Good Westerners live in the civilized city space, whereas bad Soviets live in the natural habitat of the forest. The clash between them plays out in a space between these two environments, as well as in an in-between time, the period between night and day (seven o'clock in the morning).

Setting and actants

At first glance the spatiotemporal background against which the story develops appears relatively fixed. The Russian formalists categorize it as a static motif; Barthes would call it a pure or an informative index. Both terms are appropriate since the fictional universe does not cause the story to develop. However, story development is inconceivable without the setting, which makes it possible for actions to take place and actants to become involved in them. It is impossible to imagine roles and events without embedding them in time and space.

Chatman's schematic representation of the story insists on the fundamental connections between actions, actants, and setting.³⁹ His visualization is as follows:

Story:	1. events	1.1. actions
		1.2. happenings
	2. existents	2.1. characters
		2.2. settings

Story according to Chatman

Adapted from Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 26.

Events are dynamic components of the story, while *existents* are relatively fixed points around which the story can unravel. Obviously, characters and setting can develop in the course of the story, but in Chatman's proposal a certain stability remains. Ruth Ronen qualifies this relative permanence by defining setting as "an immediately relevant frame [i.e., a fictional place] regardless of the continuous textual evidence for its relevance."⁴⁰ Ronen does not require Chatman's continuity.

In a very elaborate analysis of setting, Gabriel Zoran tries to solve the fundamental problem: that time rather than space dominates "in the structuring of the narrative text."⁴¹ Bringing in the experience of the reader (who is mostly invisible in structuralist narratology), he distinguishes three levels of the "reconstructed world" in which the char-

Time and space according to Zoran

acters operate and the action takes place. On the *textual* level, the fictional world still retains some of the structuring patterns of the text. It may be determined, for instance, by the perspective of a character (which to us is an aspect of “narrative”) or by the narrator’s regular mention of a specific location (which to us is an aspect of “narration”). On “the *chronotopic* level, the reconstructed world is already independent of the verbal arrangement of the text, but is still dependent on the plot,” which means, for instance, that certain locations are points of departure and others represent the end of the journey. Finally, on the *topographic* level, “the world is perceived as existing for itself [. . .] cut off entirely from any structure imposed by the verbal text and the plot.”⁴² The topographic level is clearly part of the story in its most abstract guise, and the chronotopic level also implies a degree of the abstraction integral to our definition of the story. Interestingly, the reader supposedly moves back and forth between the three levels, which turns the notion of the story into an element of the act of reading. In chapter 3 of this handbook we will return to the role of the reader in the construction of the fictional world.

Bipolar scales

Zoran conceives of the topographical structure as a map based on a series of oppositions. Structuralism in general likes to work with binary oppositions that can form the basis of a sliding scale.⁴³ Greimas thus distinguishes between topical spaces (where the action takes place) and heterotopical spaces (where the previous or subsequent actions take place).⁴⁴ Following Mieke Bal, one could investigate space relying on pairs such as inside versus outside, high versus low, and far versus close.⁴⁵ It is no coincidence, for instance, that the interminable tortures in the work of the Marquis de Sade almost always take place in the closed, dark space of an underground dungeon. A structuralist will use similar oppositions to characterize time: short versus long, continuation versus interruption, day versus night, light versus dark. In his story “Het lek in de eeuwigheid” (The leak in eternity), the Dutch author Willem Frederik Hermans indulges in the opposition between a long darkness and a brief period of electric illumination by a fixture that switches off automatically. Just as the light comes on briefly in an eternity of darkness, human life appears briefly in an eternity of death.⁴⁶

The central aspects of Bal's space and time characterization, which she borrows from the structuralist semiotician Juri Lotman, are the drawing of a borderline and its potential transgression.⁴⁷ Actions and actants transgressing these borders often play a central role in the story. A burglar or spy is unthinkable without the violation of the border between private and public, open and closed. Murderers and rapists do not respect these borders either. In the bourgeois novel heroes often repair borders, while in the adventure novel they are likely to overturn the bourgeois system. Transgression, for that matter, may be a step on the way to recovery. In the medieval Dutch epic *Karel ende Elegast* (Charlemagne and Elegast) the title character, Karel, goes out stealing in order to discover who stands inside and who stands outside the feudal space. Of course the stealing takes place at night and includes a journey through a dark wood. Night and the wood form part and parcel of the chaos that normally threatens order but that in this case brings about its restoration.

Borderlines

In "Pegasian" space and time are not evoked very clearly, but some indications are nevertheless available. The story concerns a lesson during which many horses trot around in a "carousel." The association with a merry-go-round provides points to the story's central theme—dressage and discipline. The horses do not run around in nature, and their circuits in the riding school make them as unfree as the wooden horses on a merry-go-round. This image therefore conjures up three different spaces: nature, the riding school, and a fairground. If the carousel in the fairground implies an element of fun along with the immobility of its horses, this aspect of the story's spatial structure might resolve its basic opposition: nature and the discipline of dressage.

*Setting in
Mutsaers*

Space and time are important in "The Map" as well. The boy discovers the near-divine map on a Sunday, and he sees it through a forbidden gap. The map's attraction can largely be attributed to the fact that the boy's peek at it was unexpected and actually prohibited. Later on, the map allows a look at the entire environment of his youth, at all the roads and pathways he biked as a boy. In this respect the map provides a visible and spatial representation of an entire period in his life. But as soon as that representation is complete, the fun is over. Regarding "The Map," Zoran's conception of the topographical structure as a

Setting in Krol

map coincides with the object that evokes the narrator's entire childhood. This overlap probably helps the reader to imagine space on the topographical level, a mental effect that might well make it easier to develop a version of the nostalgia at the heart of the story. While this interpretation does work with the combination of space and time on the level of the story, its emphasis on the reader goes beyond the tenets of structuralism.

Setting in
Wasco

In Wasco's book of graphic fiction, *Het Tuitel complex* (The Tuitel complex), the "City" page we focus on in this handbook appears to the right of a page marked "Horizon." The differences between the two in terms of color (light versus dark) and in terms of image size (wide like a horizon versus narrow, as in an inner city streetscape) appeal to a general opposition between country and town. It's only at the very end of "City" that the protagonist's spaceship rises above the roofs and a panoramic view reenters the text, and even then it is not an open space but a cramped, claustrophobic one. The horizon is nowhere to be seen; it is blocked by the mass of buildings. However, Zoran's topographical structure here amounts to an unusual map, since the urban environment is quite strange. Unusual holes dot the streets and ramps look like dangerous slides. Sharp objects protrude from unexpected places, and there is even a kind of electric chair on a terrace. Panels eleven and twelve feature weird works of art, which enhance the artificiality of the environment. If there is life in this city, it can't be seen (save for a lonely bird, whose yellow color seems to suggest it doesn't belong there). Of course the spaceship indicates the future, which could suggest the chronotope of the dystopia, in which a worry about our contemporary world (like the anonymity of city life) appears as a characteristic of a more or less distant time (the city in "City" is empty).

2. Narrative

Narrative constitutes the second level of structuralist narratology. This level no longer concerns the abstract logic of sequences but rather the concrete way in which events are presented to the reader. As can be seen in the following diagram, the analysis of narrative consists of three main parts: time, characterization, and focalization.

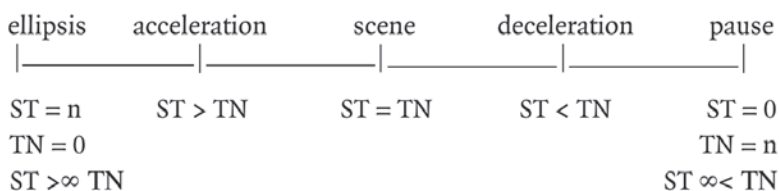
Time	– Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> ellipsis
		<input type="checkbox"/> acceleration/ summary
		<input type="checkbox"/> scene
		<input type="checkbox"/> deceleration
		<input type="checkbox"/> pause
	– Order	<input type="checkbox"/> direction = anachrony (versus achrony)
		* analepsis
		* prolepsis
		<input type="checkbox"/> distance * internal
		* external
Character	– Frequency	* mixed
		<input type="checkbox"/> reach * punctual
		* durative
		<input type="checkbox"/> singulative * simple
		* plural
		<input type="checkbox"/> iterative * external vs. singulative
		* internal vs. singulative
		<input type="checkbox"/> repetitive
	– Characteristics – Characterization	<input type="checkbox"/> direct
		<input type="checkbox"/> indirect: metonymy
		<input type="checkbox"/> analogy: metaphor
Focalization	– Types	<input type="checkbox"/> external/ internal
		<input type="checkbox"/> fixed/ variable/ multiple
	– Properties	<input type="checkbox"/> space: panoramic/ simultaneous/ limited
		<input type="checkbox"/> time: panchronic/ retrospective/ synchronic
		<input type="checkbox"/> cognition: omniscient/ limited
		<input type="checkbox"/> emotion: objective/ subjective
		<input type="checkbox"/> ideology * explicit/ implicit
		* unequivocal/ polyphonic

2.1. Time

Structuralism analyzes *time* by studying the relation between the time of the story and the time of the narrative. For instance, a central event in the story may well remain untold in the narrative, or an event that takes a long time to transpire in the story might be mentioned briefly and casually in the narrative. In order to systematize the various aspects of time, Genette uses three criteria: duration, order, and frequency.⁴⁸

Duration is measured by comparing the time necessary to read the account of an event to the time an event takes on the level of the story. *Duration*

The first of these two dimensions builds on the act of reading in order to determine how long an action or event lasts on the level of narrative. Since these actions and events take place in the narrative as it is being told, this dimension is usually called the *time of narration*, even though what really matters here is the time of reading. In the next figure presented, this time on the level of narrative appears as TN. The second dimension is usually called *narrated time* and refers to the duration of events on the level of the story, which is why it appears as ST (story time) below. Since Günther Müller had already introduced the distinction between the time of narration and narrated time in 1948, it existed long before the advent of structuralist narratology.⁴⁹ Bal distinguishes five possible relations between TN and ST.⁵⁰ We represent them on a sliding scale as follows:



Adapted from Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 102.

Ellipsis At the ellipsis pole, an event that does happen in the story is absent from the narrative. As a result, story duration becomes infinitely longer than duration in the narrative. Events that remain untold can be very important. A crime novel, for instance, will effect more suspense when the execution of a planned murder or assault does not appear in the narrative. In a psychological novel, things that remain unsaid can be essential because they may point to repressed or dismissed traumas.

Acceleration Acceleration is another term for summary. An event that takes a long time can be summarized in one sentence, so that the time of narration is shorter than story time. In “The Map” the narrator says, “and the roads I had not had yet, that is where I went.” The bicycle rides, which must have taken quite some time, are summarized very briefly, which makes the narrative move faster than the story.

Scene Scene indicates an almost perfect overlap of the duration of an event with that of its representation or reading. A dialogue that appears word

for word in a novel will take almost as long to read in the text as it takes to utter in the story. The equation sign on the scale, however, is of course a fiction since the time of narration and narrated time are never entirely identical. For instance, it is almost impossible to make pauses in the story conversation last equally long in the text. A brief line such as, "The conversation came to a stop," is an example of acceleration rather than a scene.

Deceleration occurs when the time necessary to read the description of an event turns out to be longer than the event itself. A text can halt, for instance, at the moment a killer points the gun at a victim. This would take merely a second in the story, but it can be described in dozens of pages. Deceleration, therefore, is very useful for creating or decreasing suspense. An almost scenic description of a fight thus may be followed by a deceleration in which the narrator enters at length into a brief event such as the arrival of the police. The Dutch author Gerard Reve likes to use this strategy: in his novels extended artistic descriptions decelerate the action, which often does not amount to much. Since these descriptions, which circle the unspeakable secret appearing in every Reve novel, are there to justify the passivity of the protagonists, one could say that form adheres to content. At the beginning of *Het boek van violet en dood* (The book of violet and death), the narrator even makes Reve's habit explicit: "No, nothing much happens: I meet someone; I meet that someone again once or twice, and then he tragically disappears."⁵¹ The rest of the narrative comes down to one giant deceleration that continuously postpones the little action there is.

Deceleration

Pause represents an extreme form of deceleration. Nothing happens anymore, so the story comes to a standstill. A clear example of this occurs in *Max Havelaar*, by Multatuli. Stern, the narrator, discusses the precarious balance between the continuing of the narrative and its temporary suspension. By way of example he brings up "the heroine who is leaping from some balcony four floors up." Instead of describing that action, he brings it to a halt: "Only then, with a bold contempt for all the laws of gravity, shall I leave her floating between heaven and earth until I have relieved my feelings in a detailed picture of the beauties of the countryside."⁵² Seventy pages later the narrator returns to the moment when he introduced the pause: "I would give a good deal, reader, to know exactly how long I could keep a heroine

Pause

floating in the air while I described a castle, before your patience was exhausted and you put my book down, without waiting for the poor creature to reach the ground.”⁵³

The combination of ellipsis, acceleration, scene, deceleration, and pause determines the rhythm of the narrative and contributes to suspense or monotony. Narrative texts with continuous acceleration or deceleration create a much more dynamic impression than texts that always opt for the same type of duration. Sketches such as “Pegasian” mostly go for acceleration, and indeed the riding lesson is described only briefly. “The Map” summarizes an entire period in a few sentences, and it deals with a substantial part of the narrator’s youth in a few paragraphs. This summarizing method of representation is relinquished only briefly in order to describe how the boy sees the map in the shop window. This brief change has an effect similar to that of zooming in with a camera; it enables the reader to concentrate on a specific detail or fleeting event.

*Time of
narration*

When trying to establish duration, the definition of the time of narration presents a major problem. How does one measure the time the narrative devotes to an event? Is that the time required to describe the event or to read about it? It is usual for reading time to function as the norm, but this speed obviously differs from reader to reader. Structuralists then have recourse to a purely quantitative element: the number of pages. Forty pages to describe one minute means deceleration, while one page to describe a year comes down to acceleration. This means that time is reduced to space or more specifically “the amount of space in the text each event requires.”⁵⁴ By the reduction of temporal development to a certain number of pages, time is stripped of its dynamics. This connects with the already mentioned spatialization characteristic of the structuralist approach.

Narrated time

Another problem with duration is the definition of narrated time. Some narrative texts, such as the *nouveau roman* and postmodern encyclopedic novels, make it very difficult to reconstruct the story or even the events. In his encyclopedic novel *Groente* (Vegetables), the Dutch author Atte Jongstra presents a collage of texts taken from manuals, cookbooks, and reference works, and he even includes pictures. This novel no longer has a story made up of chronological and causal connections. How, then, can readers establish the duration of events? If

they can't, it also becomes impossible to search for the relation between the time of these events and that of their description, which means the structuralist definition of duration does not apply here.

A similar problem arises with regard to *order*. Order is determined on the basis of the relation between the linear chronology in the story and the order of events in the narrative. If it is impossible to reconstruct story events and to arrange them in a clear chronology, order in a narrative text cannot be assessed by using the structuralist method. If it is possible to order events nicely on the story level, for instance in a sequence from one to five, then one can see how the narrative complicates that order, such as in the sequence four, two, five, one, three. Order

Genette specifies order with reference to three categories: direction, distance, and reach. Specification always depends on a clear primary narrative. This primary narrative or *récit premier* functions as a norm or, in spatial terms, as a measure for the location of events in time.⁵⁵ The primary narrative is not the same as the story, because it is visible in the text and does not necessarily contain all the events of the latter. Still, the primary narrative poses the same problem as the story. If a novel does not allow the reader to establish its primary narrative, one can forget about order altogether. A text brimming with associations, such as James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, cannot be approached with this method.

Two directions are possible with regard to the primary narrative: forward and backward. If the primary narrative shows, for instance, the last three weeks in the life of a man who is the protagonist, all memories of his youth and all anticipations of life after death would fall outside this narrative. Such a memory would be an example of *analepsis*, and such an anticipation would be an example of *prolepsis*. The equivalent English terms would be *flashback* and *flashforward*.⁵⁶ In German, Eberhard Lämmert popularized the terms *Rückwendung* and *Vorausdeutung*.⁵⁷ Direction

If the *analepsis* or *prolepsis* concerns the element in the foreground of the primary narrative, Genette calls it *homodiegetic*. For instance, if a dying man remembers a moment from his own life, this would constitute a *homodiegetic analepsis*. If, however, he remembers something about a person who does not appear or has only a minor role in the primary narrative, then the *analepsis* is *heterodiegetic*. The dying man

may remember a boyhood friend who has disappeared, which may lead to a story about that friend and some related details concerning him, none of which the dying man has experienced himself.

Defining direction can often be tricky. Suppose the dying man remembers something from his adolescence but then looks ahead from that period to his twenties. The prolepsis with respect to his adolescence is an analepsis with respect to the primary narrative. "The Map" features a mild version of this: "because I had had all roads, nothing was added anymore, and one day I would remove the map from the wall." This one day represents a prolepsis with respect to the period in which the boy was biking around but an analepsis with respect to the moment at which the narrator remembers his youth.

The situation becomes more complex when the various memories are not clearly dated. Many autobiographical novels contain a whirl of memories and anticipations that connect associatively and are very hard to locate. In such a case the reader does not know whether memory A goes backward or forward with respect to memory B. Genette uses the term *achrony* for passages that cannot be dated. Prolepsis and analepsis, on the other hand, exist only if they can be clearly located in time. They are examples of *anachrony*, a departure from the chronology in the primary narrative.

Distance Order is a matter of not just direction but also distance, which concerns the temporal gap between primary narrative on the one hand and prolepsis or analepsis on the other. The dying man may remember an event that took place two days ago, which therefore falls within the primary narrative, or he may remember something that happened fifty years ago, which clearly remains outside the primary narrative. If the remembered or anticipated period falls within the primary narrative, Genette speaks of an internal analepsis or prolepsis. External is when this period falls outside the primary narrative. And finally there is mixed analepsis or prolepsis, which covers a memory starting before the primary narrative but ending within it, or an anticipation beginning within the primary narrative and ending outside it.

Reach Apart from direction and distance, order is also characterized by reach. This term refers to the stretch of time covered by the analepsis or prolepsis. If the memory concerns one particular event, then the analepsis is punctual. If it constitutes an entire period, the flashback

is durative or complete. The analepsis in “The Map” is durative since it describes the complete extent of time from the discovery of the map until its removal.

Although the number of terms enumerated here suggests a rather abstract system, investigating order in a narrative text is of great importance. The more an author indulges in flashbacks and flashforwards, the more complex the narrative becomes. This also leads to all sorts of new relationships between the various periods. If on the same page the text refers to three or four periods from the life of the protagonist, chances are that a reader will start to see connections between these periods. As a result, themes may emerge more clearly or suspense may increase. In *Sunken Red*, by Jeroen Brouwers, the main character’s thoughts go back and forth between very divergent moments: the Japanese internment camp, the boarding school, the sexual relationship with Liza, the garden party, the birth of his daughter, and the death of his mother. All these stages connect through the joint image of his mother’s disgrace. The turmoil in the novel’s time structure formally reflects the unrest and roaming typical of the I-character.

Frequency refers to the relation between the number of times an event occurs in the story and the number of times it occurs in the narrative. Obviously there are three possibilities here: less often, more often, and just as often. When the event occurs just as often in the story as it does in the narrative, Genette uses the term *singulative*. Something that happens once and is described once is a simple singulative, while a reoccurrence in the story that is described just as often in the text is a plural singulative. The discovery of the map in Gerrit Krol’s story provides an example of a simple singulative. If the boy had visited the store more than once, and if each of these visits had appeared separately in the text, then that would have been a plural singulative.

Frequency
Singulative

Very often such an exact coincidence does not seem appropriate. If you describe something that happens regularly every time it happens, the text may become monotonous or endless. For story events that happen repeatedly but are presented only once in the text, Genette uses the term *iteration*. The first sentence of Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* offers a good example of this second type of frequency: “For a long time I used to go to bed early.”⁵⁸ The formulation “for a long time” probably covers thousands of days on which the protagonist went

Iteration

to bed early. Iteratives are prevalent in the description of habits. Here are some examples from “From a View to a Kill”: “Bond always had the same thing—an Americano—Bitter Campari—Cinzano”; “When Bond was in Paris, he invariably stuck to the same addresses”; “After dinner he generally went to the Place Pigalle.”⁵⁹ In “The Map” the clause “I occasionally traveled somewhere by train” is an iterative since the journey is mentioned only once but will have taken place many times.

Iteratives can be combined with singulatives. A party described singulatively can contain an iterative such as “He repeatedly harassed his neighbor, until she could not take it any longer and left the table.” Genette calls this an internal iterative since it remains within the temporal limits of the singulatively described party. If it were to fall outside these limits, Genette would call it external. For instance, the description of the party could contain a sentence such as the following: “That is what he would do for the rest of his life: harass people who did not ask for it.”

Repetition

Genette calls the third type of frequency *repetition*, by which he means the repeated description in the text of an event that takes place only once on the level of the story. Thus the main character in *Sunken Red* continues to ruminate on the scene in which his mother is beaten by a Japanese soldier. Repetitions of this kind often embody various standpoints, that is to say, the same event is considered by various characters. With postmodern novels it can be hard to decide whether the various standpoints relate to a single event or various events or whether they are sheer invention. *Een fabelachtig uitzicht* (A fabulous view), by the Dutch author Gijs IJlander, includes several versions of a walk during which a dead animal, possibly a squirrel, is found. The characters entertain widely diverging views of what happened, which may lead the reader to doubt their truthfulness. The narrator, a stuffed squirrel, does not decide the matter, and perhaps the characters’ views are even the animal’s fabrication.⁶⁰ For such a complex and undecidable case, structuralism, which functions only on the basis of clear event reconstruction, cannot offer a solution.

2.2. Character

Having addressed time as the first dimension of narrative, we now take up *character*, the second dimension. While story deals with abstract

roles, narrative involves their concretization. The central question in this respect concerns the way in which a character is present and represented in narrative.

First, its presence can be grasped in terms of characteristics, which structuralist narratology tends to schematize in a list of features. The most famous example of this is Barthes's semantic or semic code, which he also calls the character code and which consists of a combination of minimal semantic characteristics (semes). Characters are the result of such combinations: "When identical semes traverse the same proper name several times and appear to settle upon it, a character is created. Thus, the character is a product of combinations: the combination is relatively stable (denoted by the recurrence of the semes) and more or less complex (involving more or less congruent, more or less contradictory figures); this complexity determines the character's 'personality,' which is just as much a combination as the odor of a dish or the bouquet of a wine."⁶¹ In this view "the person is no more than a collection of semes."⁶²

Characteristics

Later structuralists, like Philippe Hamon in his classic 1972 study of character, will present a much broader view on character.⁶³ They recognize the role of the reader in the semiotic makeup of the character, but even then the list of semes remains the basic level of investigation. Hamon calls that level the "signified of the character," and he represents the collection of semes in terms of "axes"—such as gender, geographical origin, and ideology—and "functions," such as victorious battle and reception of a good.⁶⁴ Again, a character is described as a list of characteristics.

The second aspect of the character is more dynamic and focuses on the way it is presented in the narrative. Hamon deals with this aspect in two ways: he looks at the character as signified, that is, the form given to the character (e.g., its name), and at the rules that this formulation has to follow (e.g., rules of logic, common sense, and genre). This leads to a complex frame that is hard to use for the practical study of characters and combines the levels of narrative with that of narration. As a consequence, we will start from a much simpler view on characterization, the one offered by Rimmon-Kenan, who discerns three ways of characterization.⁶⁵

Characterization

First, a character can be described *directly*.⁶⁶ This type of characterization occurs in many traditional novels that introduce a character

*Direct
characterization*

with an enumeration of character traits. These traits may relate to psychological states as well as to outward appearance. Direct characterization always takes the form of specifying and evaluative statements such as the following: "Mister Hoorn was a warm and honest individual, though his casual conversation and jokes could not be called brilliant. But stupid, no, that he was not."⁶⁷

A central question in this connection relates to the origin of such statements. Does the character itself pronounce them? Or do they come from an omniscient narrator, or another character? The answers to these questions have a profound influence on the reliability of the characterization. Direct characterizations belong to the most straightforward strategies to inform the reader, but they can easily be (ab)used to send the reader in the wrong direction. At the beginning of the story "A Rose for Emily," by William Faulkner, the characterization of "noble" Emily is emphatically positive, but the reader soon realizes that those positive statements are inaccurate and misleading.⁶⁸

*Indirect
characterization*

The second type is *indirect* characterization.⁶⁹ This type is based on metonymy, that is, it works with elements that are contiguous with the character. Actions, for instance, often follow naturally from a character's identity. Discourse too says a lot, literally and figuratively. The words and style used by characters betray their social position, their norms and values, and their psychology. The characters' physical appearance and their environment can be telling too. Ben, the main character of *Ansichten uit Amerika* (Postcards from America), by Willem Brakman, moves to new residences a number of times, but his environment continues to resemble a labyrinth. His house is "very intricately designed," and the streets form an obscure network and "become hard to follow." The phrase "labyrinth of small streets" comes up in all sorts of contexts related to Ben.⁷⁰ It therefore says something about the claustrophobic and paranoid worldview of this character.

*Characterization
through analogy*

Third, characters can be described with the help of *analogy*, which leads to metaphor instead of metonymy.⁷¹ In "Pegasian" the main character's identity is partly established through implicit comparison with the horse. Just like the horse, the female rider wants to break free from the ground and take off. The latter refers to the text's message. The fact that metaphors often refer to a specific ethic or ideology also appears in Theodor Adorno's study of the images Kafka uses to describe his

characters. Kafka often compares his characters to animals and objects, and this metaphorical typification shows how unhuman humankind has become.⁷²

For Rimmon-Kenan the name is an example of characterization through analogy.⁷³ To the extent that the name points to an aspect of the character or to a contiguous element pertaining to it, we believe it still belongs to metonymic characterization. Thus, the names Goodman and Small describe metonymically, whereas Castle or Roach do so metaphorically. In the former case, elements are put forward that belong to the semantic domain of humankind, while in the latter case, other domains come into play. In the novel *Bint*, by the Dutch author F. Bordewijk, the pupils of a class called “Hell” have suggestive names such as “Saint’s Life” and “Precentor.” Such metaphorical or symbolic names may of course refer to the opposite of what they suggest. A character called Castle may well be weak, in which case the name is ironic, to say the least.

Similar to the name, the alter ego or second self presents a borderline case between metonymical and metaphorical characterization. Metonymical characterization does not lead to osmosis, while its metaphorical counterpart does. The borderline between the two is not always clear. Two supposedly distinct characters may resemble each other in so many ways that one could still speak of identification or blending. This is true, for instance, of the alter egos in *De ontdekking van de hemel* (The discovery of heaven), by Harry Mulisch. Uri Margolin mentions the example of a character blending with an axolotl, a type of salamander; the two exchange personalities.⁷⁴ This obviously underscores the dynamic aspect of characterization. Margolin distinguishes between three types: a transformation within one character, an evolution between two or more characters (which leaves the number of characters unchanged), and finally a change in the number of characters (e.g., by cloning or schizophrenic splitting).⁷⁵

The structuralist penchant for abstract and unchanging deep structures goes against the concrete and dynamic nature of characters and characterization. This difficulty is borne out, for instance, by the impossibility of defining what actually constitutes a hero. Bal has drawn up a list of characteristics, including “the hero occurs often in the story,” “the hero can occur alone or hold monologues,” “certain actions

*Problems with
characterization*

are those of the hero alone,” and the hero “maintains relations with the largest number of characters.”⁷⁶ A relevant question is not only how many of these characteristics have to apply before one can speak of a hero but also whether the hero concept is at all relevant for nontraditional texts, such as the *nouveau roman*, or for classical genres, such as the epistolary novel and the novel of manners. In the *nouveau roman* the hero seems to disappear in favor of an impersonal quasi objectivity; in the epistolary novel, all correspondents being more or less equal, there is no center; and in the novel of manners intense interaction between groups and classes makes a criterion such as “certain actions are those of the hero alone” irrelevant.

More generally, one might ask whether a narrative text always needs a hero. If the answer is yes, a good starting point may be Philippe Hamon’s approach. He enlists a number of narrative characteristics that are typical of heroes; they have qualifications that are unique to them (or at least unique in that particular degree); they have a wide spatial distribution (i.e., they appear often and in many places); they often appear autonomously and on their own; they have functions and can perform actions that are not equally distributed among the other characters; they are often designated by genre conventions and/or by explicit characterizations as “the hero”; and finally, there is a certain abundance and even redundancy in their characterization. However, even these dimensions are not objective and universal criteria for deciding whether or not a character is a hero.⁷⁷ The role of the reader cannot be disregarded here.

The fact that structuralist narratology holds on to concepts such as hero and villain suggests that it still deals with characterization in a very anthropomorphic way.⁷⁸ Coming from a theory that explicitly dissociates itself from subjectivist and humanist approaches to literature, this may be surprising. Indeed structuralists do not like empathic readings, which analyze the emotions displayed in the text. And yet they too risk treating constructs of words as people. In post-modern novels characters lose many of their human traits: they blend into one another, they say they are inventions of a narrator or of the text, they disappear as suddenly as they appear. Structuralism hardly knows what to do with such nonanthropomorphic characters, which proves the extent of its remaining anthropomorphism.

2.3. Focalization

Contrary to characterization, *focalization* does belong to the crucial insights narrative theory owes to structuralism. The term refers to the relation between that which is focalized—the characters, actions, and objects offered to the reader—and the focalizer, the agent who perceives and who therefore determines what is presented to the reader. So, we are talking here about the relation between the object and the subject of perception. We avoid the verb “to see” on purpose, because all senses are involved. Perception, for that matter, can imply cognitive functions such as thought and judgment. “The Map” features the following clause: “I had to recognize that I occasionally traveled somewhere by train.” The I-character is the center of perception—in this case an act of recognition that is not visual and not even sensory but that rather pertains to thought. The riding master’s perception expressed in the following sentence from “Pegasian” seems related to emotion and attitude: “Now the riding master doesn’t feel like explaining anything anymore.”

The terms we will use in the following discussion, “focalizer” and “focalized object,” are problematic. They suggest there are in a narrative text centers of perception that approximate human beings and that apparently think and feel as we all do. One might ask in the first place whether a text actually contains such distinct centers and, second, whether it is useful to study them so anthropomorphically. Genette has avoided this problem by speaking consistently of focalization, without subject or object. Bal, on the other hand, who has refined the theory of the French narratologist, believes it is necessary to distinguish between a perceiving agent and a perceived object.⁷⁹ Genette did not like her revision at all.⁸⁰ However, the distinction between focalizer and focalized object has in the meantime been accepted, probably because it can help clarify the rather vague and monolithic concept of focalization.⁸¹

*Focalizer and
focalized object*

One of those clarifications has to do with (un)reliable perception, which can be described thanks to this distinction between a perceiving subject and its object. The relation between these two is crucial, for it allows the reader to gauge the information provided by the text. If a character is constantly seen through the eyes of a single focalizer, one may wonder whether this view is reliable. Is it really true that

a woman is a flirt if you only see her through the eyes of her partner? Conversely, one character might be perceived by so many focalizers that the reader has too much information to be able to arrive at a coherent and reliable image.

Types of
focalization

Internal and
external

We will discuss focalization using the three criteria that we will also refer to in our section on narration: types, characteristics, and textual indications allowing for the determination of these types and characteristics. Two questions must be answered in order to determine focalization *types*. The first concerns the position of focalizers with regard to the fictional universe. If the focalizers belong to it, they are internal; if they remain outside of it, they are external.⁸² Edgar Allan Poe's story "Metzengerstein" provides a clear illustration of this distinction. A fire breaks out in the stables of the Berlifitzing family, which has been on bad terms with the Metzengersteins for ages. The reader sees the reaction of the young baron, Von Metzengerstein, through the eyes of an agent who is not in the room with the baron: "But during the tumult occasioned by this occurrence, the young nobleman himself sat apparently buried in meditation, in a vast and desolate upper apartment of the family palace of Metzengerstein." One could imagine this as a scene caught by a camera on the shoulder of the narrator, who does not appear in the story. Next, however, "his eyes were turned unwittingly to the figure of an enormous, and unnaturally colored horse." From then onward the reader sees the scene through the eyes of the young baron: "The horse itself, in the fore-ground of the design, stood motionless and statue-like."⁸³ This switch between external and internal focalization can be compared to the occasional image change during the live transmission of a Formula One race. Most of the time the camera is placed above or on the side of the circuit, but sometimes viewers find themselves inside the race because the images come from a small camera installed on one of the cars. Of course this focalization is not perfectly internal, since the viewer does not really see through the eyes of the driver.

Narrative texts with numerous levels complicate the relation between internal and external focalization. Let us return to *Een weekend in Oostende*, by Willem Brakman. The main narrative deals with Blok. When he is perceived by the narrator, who never appears as a character in the story, focalization is external. For instance, "In the evening, all spruced up, he pedaled on the borrowed bike to the birthday

party.” Focalization becomes internal when Blok hears the waltz entitled “Gold und Silber” (Gold and silver), “which moved him to tears, because it made him think of everything at once.”⁸⁴ Things get more complicated when Blok starts to tell a story about his Uncle Anton. In the beginning of this story the account is filtered through Blok’s perception, as for instance in, “On a beautiful summer night it was so hot and tepid that even the dead in the graveyard rapped on the lids and called out: ‘Please . . . just for a moment.’”⁸⁵ This is external focalization with respect to the story about Uncle Anton since the reader’s information entirely depends on Blok, who does not appear as a character in the story he tells. With respect to the main narrative about Blok, however, this quotation amounts to internal focalization since the reader hears about everything through Blok, the protagonist of the main narrative. But when Uncle Anton’s perceptions start to infiltrate Blok’s story about him, focalization in this secondary story also becomes internal. For instance, “Uncle Anton came walking by with his calloused little hands; he was amazed to hear how her fair sex was emitting all this seductive language.”⁸⁶

External and internal, therefore, must not be seen as absolute concepts, especially when the text features several embedded stories. Internal focalization on the level of the main narrative can become external on the level of a secondary narrative. Even when there is no embedding, the focalizer can be hard to determine. At the beginning of the novella *Suikerpruimen* (Sugarplums), by Huub Beurskens, the character Stein appears to be the (internal) focalizer, but certain passages suggest (external) focalization by the narrator. At one point Stein and Patty John are sitting on a restaurant terrace: “In between the private yachts and the small fishing boats, the dark water reflected the many little colored lamps.”⁸⁷ Who sees this? Stein or the narrator? Impossible to decide.

The alternation between internal and external focalization is always present in narrative texts. It is also ideally suited to manipulating the reader, who often does not realize that information has been filtered through the perception of a character or the narrator. As a result, the reader might treat subjective information provided by a character as objective information coming from a detached narrator. This possibility is inherent in what, following Dorrit Cohn, we have called

consonant psycho-narration, where the narrator adheres so closely to the character's perceptions that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two.

Nevertheless, the distinction is not to be neglected. Even if character and narrator coincide in a first-person text, there still exists a difference between internal and external focalization.⁸⁸ If the narrating I considers something the experiencing I did, then there is external focalization if the scene is perceived by the narrating I and internal focalization if it is perceived by the experiencing I. Here is an example from *Suikerpruimen*: "I was annoyed at it, probably because of a kind of professional jealousy, I now think."⁸⁹ Since the experiencing I felt the annoyance, it is internally focalized; since the narrating I gives a reason for the annoyance, it is externally focalized.

*Focalization
and person*

The examples show that the choice of internal and external focalization does not depend on person. First-person narration can be focalized externally, while third-person narration can be focalized internally. "I was very arrogant at the time" is an example of external focalization, while "he considered her extremely arrogant" is focalized internally. The type of narration therefore must not be confused with the type of focalization.

Internal and external focalizers can either remain on the surface or penetrate the things they are perceiving. In a crime novel very often only the killer's external characteristics appear, so that the reader has to search for the killer's motivations. This adds to the suspense, and it enhances the reader's eagerness to solve the mystery. When focalization penetrates a character, it results in the observation of emotions, cognitive functions, and psychological detail. These can either be perceived by a detached narrator (in which case focalization is external) or by a character (in which case it is internal). The potential combinations and alternations between the various types of focalization also enable an author to create and sustain suspense. If the first chapter of a novel contains description of a character's thoughts and they include plans for a murder, he or she will appear as the most likely suspect for the murder committed in the second chapter. But in order to keep the reader guessing, the text may stick to the seemingly innocent exterior of the character in subsequent chapters, so that it becomes impossible to decide immediately whether he or she is really guilty.

As we mentioned before, types of focalization are determined on the basis of two criteria. The first concerns the focalizer's position: external or internal. The second criterion has to do with stability. If the events of the story are perceived by a single agent, then Genette calls this *fixed* focalization. If the events are perceived by two or more characters who alternate, Genette speaks of *variable* focalization. If various agents of perception consecutively focus on the same event, Genette speaks of *multiple* focalization.⁹⁰ A clear distinction between variable and multiple focalization requires a consideration of the perceived object. In the case of multiple focalization the object remains unchanged, for instance when the same event is first seen through the eyes of character A and later through the eyes of character B. In the case of variable focalization the focalized object changes with every new perception, for instance when event X is perceived by character A and event Y by character B. Since Genette does not distinguish between subject and object of focalization, he does not develop the clarification we offer here.

"Pegasian" features variable focalization. Sometimes the reader is guided by the female rider's perceptions ("What are those flaps for, in fact?"), sometimes by the riding master ("And it wouldn't hurt to consult a few books on cavalry"). "The Map" also has variable focalization, since the reader is made to look not only through the eyes of the boy ("The village I knew so well and which I had never seen on a map!") but also through those of the narrating I ("I haven't kept it either"). In the two stories the alternation of the perception center reflects a thematic confrontation between the unorthodox and naïve view on the one hand and the disciplined and adult view on the other. In Wasco's "City" the reader follows as the protagonist walks about, but (maybe apart from panels two and three) the perspectives on the buildings and objects are not that of the protagonist. In the panel with the wired chair, for instance, the little figure is on a lower level than the chair and looking away from it. So, while most of "City" is determined by the activity of the protagonist, most if not all of the focalization is external and thus seems quite stable.

Showing the same event through a number of focalizers (multiple focalization) adds variety, but it often complicates the narrative. In *Suikerpruimen*, Patty John betrays her husband, Stein, with Ruben. Their first sexual encounter is initially presented through Ruben, and

then through Patty John. Here is Ruben: "Before I went out with her into that urine-reeking Pigeon Alley, and she pushed me against the wall and stuck her tongue between my lips, in the humid August night, I had quickly relieved myself of some extra pressure."⁹¹ And here is Patty John's perspective: "It was a humid August night when, in a narrow alley that reeked of vomit, urine, pigeon shit, and, she imagined, horse chestnut blossoms, she let herself be opened, lifted, and rammed."⁹² In Ruben's perception Patty John is the more active person since she pushes him against the wall; in Patty John's experience Ruben is more active than she is since she lets *him* open, lift, and ram her. The fact that they both feel taken advantage of reflects one of the problems in their relationship. Their initial passion rapidly deteriorates into passivity. They both feel misled since their partner has failed to deliver on his or her promises. These content-related aspects are underscored by the choice of multiple focalization, which shows how differently the lovers interpret their first sexual encounter.

Properties of
focalization

Space

The different types of focalization (internal versus external and stable versus unstable) can be specified with reference to a number of properties that Rimmon-Kenan prefers to call *facets*.⁹³ The first two properties concern the focalizer's spatiotemporal perception. In terms of space the focalizer can impose a panoramic, simultaneous, or limited view on the reader. In the case of a panoramic view the focalizer controls the entire space of the narrative. The beginning of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* adopts such a panoramic view: "Two mountain chains traverse the republic roughly from north to south, forming between them a number of valleys and plateaus. Overlooking one of these valleys, which is dominated by two volcanoes, lies, six thousand feet above sea level, the town of Quauhnahuac."⁹⁴

There is simultaneous focalization when the reader perceives what happens in different locations at the same time. Harry Mulisch, for instance, repeatedly illustrates his principle of "octavity" (the same and yet different) by showing divergent events taking place at the same moment. He suggests that these events resemble each other like a musical note and its octave. The simultaneity of events in different locations is traditionally represented by formulations such as "In the meantime" or "While this was going on."

A less traditional way of showing simultaneity is the use of columns

or text strips on top of one another, which results in a simultaneous presentation of different narratives. In *Minuet*, Louis Paul Boon places a collage of newspaper clippings at the top of the page. Below comes the “normal” narrative text. The first sentence of the newspaper section is as follows: “A farm laborer found a naked girl tied to a tree in a snow-covered field.” The cold suggested in this sentence provides a link with the first sentence of the regular text: “My work in the refrigerating chambers was rather monotonous: checking temperatures which had to remain at freezing point day and night.”⁹⁵

With respect to space, next to panoramic and simultaneous focalization, there is also limited perception. This is the typical situation of a character since his or her perceptions are most often coupled with the limited space in which he or she moves. Rimmon-Kenan holds that the panoramic and simultaneous views are possible only for external focalizers, but we disagree.⁹⁶ A character can imagine perfectly what happens elsewhere. Imagination forms part of the focalizer’s perception. Such panoramic views are therefore possible, not only owing to an actual position (from an airplane, for instance) but also owing to the character’s imagination.

Just like spatial perception, temporal perception can be divided into three types. Panchronic focalizers survey all time periods. They can look backward and forward. This prediction amounts to a flashforward. If the narrative only looks back, focalization is retrospective, as is the case in the typical autobiography where the narrating I considers the experiencing I. Finally, perception can take place simultaneously with the events, in which case there is synchronic focalization.

Time

Obviously, the various temporal and spatial focalizations can alternate. In *Sunken Red* the narrating I remembers his childhood in the Japanese internment camp. In the following passage the first sentence is retrospective, while the second one is prospective within the retrospection: “*Then* it left me untouched. I was not to be touched by it until much later.” Then there is a passage with synchronic focalization: “I see the Jap beating a woman with a rattan cane.”⁹⁷

Apart from time and space, psychological properties play an important role in the further description of focalization. With the term “psychology,” we mean the cognitive, emotional, and ideological aspects of perception.⁹⁸ On the level of cognition there are focalizers who know

Cognitive
properties

everything and there are those whose knowledge is limited. In this context, omniscience is no longer directly related to the act of narration. Traditional omniscient narration could thus be redefined as a form of narration in which an omniscient agent is the focalizer.⁹⁹ Normally this would be an external focalizer: the center of perception is occupied by a narrating agent outside the fictional universe. Characters can also pretend to be omniscient and to look in other people's heads, but such passages will seem more speculative and less reliable than those informed by an external focalizer. In *De Walsenkoning* (The king of waltzes), by the Dutch author Louis Ferron, the main character, also called Louis Ferron, makes it seem as if he can look into his mother's mind. He addresses her in his imagination on the occasion of her marriage: "You could already see the golden mountains he promised you."¹⁰⁰

Focalization manipulates the reader. By switching from an omniscient focalizer to a limited one, the reader can be kept in suspense. The beginning of the medieval narrative *Karel ende Elegast* is focalized through an omniscient agent from whom the reader learns that an angel tells Karel, the king, to leave his castle and start stealing. When Karel meets a black knight in the woods, the omniscient focalizer relinquishes his position to the king. Since readers are now limited to what Karel feels and perceives, they know just as little as Karel does about the identity of the black knight. The character's fear and tension are transmitted to the reader. If an omniscient focalizer informed the reader that the black knight was the other central character, Elegast, the story would have been less exciting.

*Emotional
properties*

On the emotional level, focalization can be detached or empathic. The relation between focalizer and focalized object is crucial in this respect. If only the outside of the focalized object is perceived, focalization is detached. If, on the contrary, there is constant speculation about the thoughts and feelings of the focalized object, then perception is empathic. The above passage from *De Walsenkoning* provides an example of empathic focalization.

*Ideological
properties*

The ideology inherent in every form of perception can either be given explicitly or be implied in narrative. The way in which the external focalizer in "From a View to a Kill" perceives the non-Western criminals is telling. Their eyes are cold, their faces angular, and their language incomprehensible. The conservative "capitalist" ideology ema-

nating from the Bond stories is reinforced by their internal focalizer, James Bond, who observes and judges the Soviets in exactly the same way as the external focalizer.¹⁰¹ In “Pegasian” the ideology is expressly stated at the end when the narrator or the female rider suggests that lightness is important, “as long as you take off.” However, this preference was already implicit in the first passages focalized through the female rider.

It is not always possible to establish a text’s ideology in an unambiguous way. The longer and the more complex a narrative, the more ambiguous the ideology usually becomes. In this respect much depends on the number of focalizers and their position. If the narrative works with one external focalizer, chances are high that the ideology will be relatively unequivocal. If, however, dozens of characters function as focalizers, the result is polyphonic ideology, and the reader will have a hard time reconstructing the dominant view. But even in the case of a single external focalizer, textual ideology may be hard to delineate. Thus Gerard Reve’s novels often have a fixed external focalizer, and yet his omnipresent irony makes it impossible to decide just how literally one should take the narrator’s statements about blue-collar workers, women, and migrants.

The early structuralists did not deal at length with the ideological analysis of focalization. That is hardly surprising, since this inquiry leads away from a discussion of form into a discussion of content. Attention to ideology is the most important recent shift in the study of focalization. In chapter 3 we will present new approaches that emphasize the ideological aspects of perception in narrative.

When establishing the types and properties of focalization, readers have many textual indications at their disposal. Descriptions of focalized objects or people may help a reader to decide, for instance, between an internal or an external focalizer. Suppose the wife of Judge Jack Jones enters her husband’s study. If the text reads, “Judge Jones looked moody,” one can attribute this perception to an external focalizer, since the woman probably would not think of her husband as “Judge Jack Jones.” If, however, the text reads, “Jack seemed moody again,” it is more likely that the woman is responsible for this perception. Terms of endearment provide an extreme example of elements pointing to perception by a character rather than by an external focal-

*Textual
indications*

izer. More generally, Käte Hamburger shows that grammatical tools, such as deictic temporal adverbs, give a clear indication of the agent at the center of the narrative's perception.¹⁰²

Style too can provide indications of the focalizer. Childhood memories with many complicated and technical observations are probably externally focalized because a child would not achieve such intricacy. When Harry Mulisch discusses his childhood in *Voer voor psychologen*, he often uses a style that is not childish at all and that suggests perceptions have been filtered by the adult he has become. As a nine-year-old, Harry sees a puzzle, and there follows a very intellectual description of its top-right corner.¹⁰³ One would be inclined to conclude that a child could never see the puzzle that way, but naturally the text might also suggest that nine-year-old Harry was a genius. This ambiguity shows that textual indications can help but do not necessarily lead to an unequivocal conclusion. Here too the reader plays an important role. Unfortunately for the structuralist project, texts seldom impose their structures.

Textual indications of focalization also include linguistic features such as register and the type of language. If a story is told in a neutral version of standard language and suddenly dialect and swear words appear, this can mean that the events are no longer perceived by a neutral (external) narrator but by an (internal) character.

A great number of words can suggest a distance between the perceiving and the narrating agent, and as such they indicate that there is no internal focalization. In first-person texts, time indications often have this function. In "Now I know what I did not even suspect then," the "then" and "now" imply external focalization. Words of modality are also often used to distinguish external from internal focalization. In "It's possible I thought at the time that everything would go very well," the modal phrase "it's possible" shows that these are the thoughts of the narrating I about the experiencing I, which implies external focalization.

The list of textual indications can be endlessly extended, but this is not unproblematic. In principle, structuralist narratology wants to separate focalizer from narrator as strictly as possible. This becomes difficult if the particularities of narration are considered to be indications of focalization. If word choice, for instance, is relat-

ed to worldview, the boundary between narration and focalization may become fuzzy.¹⁰⁴

3. Narration

Narration forms the third and least abstract level of structuralist narratology. It is concerned with formulation—the entire set of ways in which a story is actually told. While the story is not visible in the text, narration involves the concrete sentences and words offered to the reader. While narrative was mostly concerned with the perception of events, narration mostly deals with the way in which these events are worded. Attention goes to the narrating voice, to speech instead of perception, to narration instead of focalization. This implies two central areas of investigation: first, narrating (including the narrating agents) and second, the way in which these agents present a character’s consciousness. These two concerns can be summarized as follows:

- Narrating

– Narrator types

□ level: extradiegetic/ intradiegetic

□ involvement: heterodiegetic/ homodiegetic

↓

*autodiegetic

*allodiegetic
- Properties

□ temporal : subsequent/ prior/ simultaneous/ interpolated

□ visibility : covert/ overt

□ reliability : high/ low

□ status : authority

* diegetic

* mimetic

Representation of consciousness

– Diegesis/ mimesis

– Indirect speech/ free indirect speech/ direct speech

– Diegetic summary/ summary, less purely diegetic/ indirect content paraphrase/ indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree/ free indirect discourse/ direct discourse/ free direct discourse

3.1. Narrating

Similar to focalization, narration also expresses a relationship between an active subject and a passive object. In this case the relationship is the one between the narrator and that which is narrated. Again similar to focalization, this relationship brings about different kinds of narration that can be further described with the help of several proper-

ties. Although Genette avoids the word *narrator* and mostly replaces it with less personal concepts such as *narrating instance*, one cannot deny that here again structuralism catches a textual aspect in human terms.¹⁰⁵ Most narratologists use the word *narrator*, and we will do so too, since the use of less anthropomorphic terms such as *narrating instance* does not prevent this instance from being characterized by means of such anthropomorphic criteria as “reliability” and “detachment.” This has led to a great deal of criticism.¹⁰⁶ However, in many recent contributions anthropomorphism is no longer regarded as a process to be avoided. In any case the distinction between various narrator types remains relevant for narrative analysis.

Narrator types
Extradiegetic
and intradiegetic

The narrator type depends on the relationship between the narrator and what is being narrated. The first criterion here concerns the relationship between the level of the narrator and the level on which the events being narrated take place. A narrator hovering over the narrated world is extradiegetic. An intradiegetic narrator, by contrast, belongs to the narrated world and is therefore below another narrating agency. If a character is presented by a narrator independent of any other narrating agent hovering above, this narrator is extradiegetic. If the character in question starts to tell a story, that individual becomes an intradiegetic narrator. The difference between the two is a hierarchical one. The extradiegetic narrator occupies the highest place in the hierarchy, while the intradiegetic narrator sits one step below. In order to make the distinction, one simply has to answer the following question: “Is this narrating agent narrated by another narrating agent or not?”

Although extradiegetic narrators occupy the highest level, this does not automatically mean that they are the most important narrating agent in any text. Turgenev’s short fictional work “Asya” begins as follows: “I was then about twenty-five (N. N. began)—as you can see, these matters belong to years long past.”¹⁰⁷ The extradiegetic narrator is the one who says “N. N. began.” In the rest of the text, this narrator does not appear again, and the reader always hears the intradiegetic narrator, the man who is described with the letters “N. N.” The hierarchically lower narrator is much more important than the higher-level colleague.

Narratee

The extradiegetic or intradiegetic narrator mostly addresses an extradiegetic or intradiegetic audience, which in chapter 1 we called the narratee. The extradiegetic narrator mostly speaks to an extradiegetic-

ic narratee. These so-called addresses to the reader do not involve the empirical reader at all but rather an agent who does not appear in the story and yet functions as the narratee. In “The Cask of Amontillado,” by Poe, the extradiegetic narrator addresses such an audience: “The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat.”¹⁰⁸ Intradiegetic narrators mostly address other intradiegetic agents, that is, other characters.

But, as we have already suggested in chapter 1, cross bonds are possible. An intradiegetic narrator can speak to a higher agent who occupies a position outside the narrative world. A character can, for instance, complain about the narrator of a story. In the Flemish modernist classic *Chapel Road* (originally published as *De Kapellekensbaan*), by Louis Paul Boon, a male character relates how a female character has complained about “boontje,” the narrator of their story: “She talked about the chapel road book, from which she’s been removed, she says.” She also thinks “that we’re neglecting too many of our heroes” and concludes, “You’re a useless writer if ever there was one.”¹⁰⁹ Conversely, an agent outside the fictional world can speak to an internal agent. For instance, an extradiegetic narrator can address the protagonists. In *Het ware leven, een roman* (Real life, a novel), the novel’s author, Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer, figures as the extradiegetic narrator. In one of the last chapters, he has an official meeting with some of his characters. In a managerial tone they discuss what should be done to keep the reader interested and to develop the existing plot lines. One of the participants wonders if they are not acting as “plot-spoilers? I mean, the reader now already knows what the outcome will be like.”¹¹⁰ Structuralism considers both cases as narrative transgressions, for which Genette has coined the term *narrative metalepsis*.¹¹¹ Although structuralists recognize the existence of such transgressions, they are keen on establishing and maintaining the boundaries.

The distinction between extra- and intradiegetic narrators causes a number of problems, of which we will discuss only two. First, one could ask whether any character who starts speaking automatically becomes an intradiegetic narrator. When a character says, “Yes, I sure do,” it appears irrelevant to analyze this statement as intradiegetic nar-

Metalepsis

*Problems with
the narrator
type distinction*

ration. It is of course an intradiegetic statement, that is, a statement by an agent within the fictional world, but it does not really amount to a story. This brings us back to a problem we considered at the beginning of this handbook: How can one define a story? And what is the most basic form of a story? Which minimal requirements must a stretch of text meet in order to qualify as a story? There is no generally accepted definition of a minimal story yet, and it will probably never materialize. In chapter 1 we defined a story as a sequence of events that readers connect in a way they consider meaningful. Needless to say, that which is meaningful for one reader does not have to be so for another. Fortunately, the problem of the minimal story is not crucial to the distinction between extradiegetic and intradiegetic passages. Indeed it does not affect the distinction between the two levels; the question is simply whether an intradiegetic passage should be considered a story.

Mise en abyme

Second, and more important, a problem arises when various levels and stories are embedded in a frame narrative. When the embedded story mirrors or summarizes the story on the higher level, this leads to the so-called *mise en abyme*. To begin with, this causes a terminological problem. Imagine the abovementioned intradiegetic narrator N. N. talking about a man identified as O. O., who in N. N.'s story starts telling his own story, say, about P. P., who in turn tells a story about someone else, and so on. How would we describe all these narrators? The narrator who starts talking in intradiegetic narration (in our example, O. O.) can be called an intra-intradiegetic narrator. Rimmon-Kenan calls this narrator "hypodiegetic," while Genette uses "metadiegetic."¹¹² The latter term is especially confusing since it suggests that a narrator who stands lower on the hierarchical ladder (and therefore sits "deeper" in the narrative) in fact stands "above" the ladder (and must therefore be placed higher). To avoid confusion, we prefer to distinguish between a narrator on the first level (extradiegetic), a narrator on the second level (intradiegetic), a narrator on the third level (intra-intradiegetic), and so on.

*Hierarchy
between
narrative levels*

With respect to embedded stories, it is not just the terms that are confusing. Sometimes it is also hard to maintain the hierarchy. Certain texts with embedded stories reverse the whole hierarchy on their deepest level and make it seem as if the supposedly highest level is actually narrated from what was thought of as the lowest. In our example the

character P. P. would then be the agent who said or wrote, “N. N. began.” If the stories by N. N., O. O., and P. P. mirror each other in this way, the result is a paradoxical form of *mise en abyme*, which Lucien Dällenbach describes as “the aporetic duplication (a sequence that is supposed to enclose the work that encloses it).”¹¹³ The paradox or *aporia* resides in the fact that the deepest level would contain the highest. Such embeddings undermine the structuralist effort to place all levels in a clear vertical hierarchy.

Again, *Een weekend in Oostende* provides an example. The first or highest story is the one about Blok. It is told by an extradiegetic narrator who never appears in it. The second or lower story is told by Blok and concerns his uncle, Anton. Here Blok is a second-level or intradiegetic narrator. He relates how Uncle Anton met a prostitute, and they were going to get married. Then Uncle Anton starts to tell a story as an intra-intradiegetic or third-level narrator. His story deals with a riveter. At the end of this embedding the text returns to the highest level, at which we find Blok’s conversation partner, Uncle Julius. He summarizes—for a colonel who has just arrived—the story told by Blok. He says, “And he told me in his turn how his Uncle Anton turned into a poet when he stood in front of a floozy, but that he had to let that talent decline because of the circumstances, since he lived in a dark street with, if I understood well, a dairyman, a few greengrocers, and a garage manager.”¹¹⁴ This sentence upsets the text’s hierarchy of levels in two ways. First of all, it is Blok and not Uncle Anton who lives in the dark street, which means Uncle Julius conflates the second- and third-level narrators. Second, the formulation “if I understood well” creates a paradox, since Blok has never told Julius anything about the dark street. Julius apparently knows things only the reader can know. In other words, an agent inside the story knows things that have been told to agents outside it. This confusion of internal and external has to do with narratees since the external narratee falls in with the internal narratee. Structuralist categorization fails in the face of texts such as this one by Brakman.

Hierarchy upset

Apart from the difference between intra- and extradiegetic, there is a second distinction on the basis of which one can establish narrator types. This distinction no longer concerns the hierarchy of levels but rather the narrator’s involvement in what is narrated. The narrator ei-

*Narrator
involvement
Homodiegetic and
heterodiegetic*

ther has experienced the narrated events, and is thus homodiegetic, or has not, and is thus heterodiegetic. If the narrator's experience is personal, the degree of involvement may vary. Perhaps this narrator has only seen things from afar or, on the contrary, played the central role in the proceedings. On this sliding scale from marginal to central involvement, one can place the traditional distinction between witness and main character. If the homodiegetic narrator is the protagonist of the story told (such as Pip in *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens), Genette applies the label "autodiegetic."¹¹⁵ The prototype here is the autobiographical narrator. Genette has no separate term for narrators who deal with things they have only witnessed. We accept Van der Voort's proposal for this situation and use the term "allodiegetic."¹¹⁶

Six types

When combined, level and involvement result in six types. First of all, there is the extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator, probably the most classical one: the narrator who hovers above the story—and thus is not narrated by another agent—and deals with things not personally experienced. This narrator can be inconspicuous if narrating exclusively in the third person but can occasionally appear in the first person. Poe's "Masque of the Red Death," which we have referred to in chapter 1, provides an example of the latter. The I-narrator is not narrated by another agent and has not experienced the terrible events being related. "Pegasian" too presents an example of an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator, this time without the use of the first person.

Second, there is the extradiegetic and autodiegetic narrator, who stands above the events narrated, but this personage *has* experienced them. More precisely, this narrator was the central character. An example of this type is the I-narrator in "The Map." The narrating I stands at the top of the hierarchy and tells a story in which he played the central role as a child. If he were to give us his father or mother as the main character, he would become a witness, and such an extradiegetic narrator would be allodiegetic. A famous example of this is Dr. Watson in the Sherlock Holmes tales. He has no narrator above him (so he is extradiegetic), but he is most often a mere witness of the things he relates (which makes him allodiegetic).

For the intradiegetic narrator, the same three possibilities apply. A character can relate things not personally experienced and thus becomes an intradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator. Such narrators can

also give us events they have witnessed, in which case they become al-lodiegetic, or events in which they played the central role, in which case these narrators become autodiegetic.

There are many advantages to this systematization of narrators, which we prefer to Stanzel's circle. To begin with, Genette avoids the confusion of Stanzel's system. Whereas Stanzel conflated speaking and perceiving agents by combining reflectors and narrators into one scheme, Genette's six types are all speaking agents. Genette specifies Stanzel's reflector as a combination of a particular narrator with a particular focalizer. An example of a reflector in terms of Genette would be an extradiegetic narrator who shows everything through the perception of a character and remains in the background while doing so. This means that for Genette there can be no scale beginning with "reflector" and ending with "teller-character," because that would mean one starts with focalizer and ends with narrator—two agents that for Genette belong to different levels of the text. They cannot be shown on a sliding scale.

*Advantages of
the hierarchy*

Stanzel's person scale resembles Genette's degrees of involvement. The "identity" Stanzel spots in I-narration corresponds to the homodiegetic narrator, while nonidentity corresponds to the heterodiegetic narrator. Stanzel's scale of perspective is for Genette not a question of narration but of focalization. Stanzel's dual internal and external perspective amounts to Genette's internal and external focalization, respectively.¹¹⁷ This comparison proves to what extent Stanzel's circle confines to the same plane elements that for structuralists belong to different planes or levels. As a tool for narrative analysis, Genette's system is more transparent.

And yet this transparency, as we already have had to establish more than once, derives from a theoretical construct that is not always borne out by actual narrative texts. Concrete texts are often more complicated than theories and do not always easily submit to classification. *Een weekend in Oostende* has already shown that the distinction between intradiegetic and extradiegetic narrators is occasionally far from clear. The same novel also proves that the distinction between hetero- and homodiegetic narrators is sometimes impossible to maintain. Uncle Anton tells a story about a riveter. It resembles a traditional heterodiegetic story since Anton relates things he himself has not experienced.

*Problems with
the hierarchy*

But as the riveter is dying, he hears the voice of his wife, who asks, “Are the lights out, Anton? . . . and the gas turned off? . . . [you] closed the upper window?” And then the text reads, “The riveter wanted to nod obediently,” which suggests he is also called Anton.¹¹⁸ Maybe the riveter is Uncle Anton, in which case he would be a homodiegetic narrator. This is impossible to decide, so it is up to the reader to settle the matter. A traditional reader is likely to say Anton is a heterodiegetic narrator who happens to have the same name as his hero. Such a reader would argue that narrators can never describe their own death. A reader versed in postmodernism might either consider Anton a homodiegetic narrator or leave the question open altogether.

*Properties of
narration*

*Temporal
properties*

One can further specify the various narrator types on the basis of three *properties*. First of all there is the temporal relation between the moment of narration and the moment at which the narrated events take place. Here Genette discerns four options.¹¹⁹ The most traditional one is that of subsequent narration (narration after the events), of which “The Map” provides an example. Although the past tense of the verb is most common here, subsequent narration can also occur in the present tense. A sentence such as “I am fifteen and I think everything still has to happen” is a seamless fit for a subsequent narration by a fifty-year-old. Often in this connection the use of the present tense has a special meaning. In “Zelfportret met tulband” (Self-portrait with turban), Harry Mulisch uses the present tense for nine crucial events from his past.¹²⁰ He calls each one of them a “today” because it makes itself felt until the moment of narration. This continuity has its symbolic expression in the use of the present tense for events in the past.

The second temporal option is one that involves prediction, which Genette calls prior narration. For instance, a character can narrate how someone else will end up. Prediction can be expressed with the help of the present or the future tense or a combination of both, as in, “You will see. In seven weeks you will be a wreck. You don’t have a job anymore then, or a wife. You drink all day and you think things can’t get worse.”

Simultaneous narration, the third temporal type, requires the use of the present tense because only that allows the perfect coincidence of action and narration. Genette mentions as examples both the *nouveau roman* and directly quoted monologue. The narrators in these cases wish to create the impression they are telling you everything the moment it

happens. Obviously this is only a trick—if the narration were really to coincide with the action, the narrator would be talking and experiencing at the same time. “Pegasian” amounts to simultaneous narration.

Finally, there is interpolated narration. For instance, in a novel action can be alternated with a letter that provides a comment on it. In such a case there is always more than one narrative level. An epistolary novel has the story told in the letters (of the letter-writing characters) and (at the other level) the story told about these characters between those letters. An example of such interspersed narration can be found in chapter 18 of *Max Havelaar*, in which Havelaar’s letters “To the Bantam Resident” constantly interrupt the action.

Next to time, visibility is the narrator’s second property, which can be represented on a sliding scale from a nearly invisible narrator to one that is extremely visible. Rimmon-Kenan speaks of covert and overt narrators.¹²¹ The difference resides mainly in their narrative procedures: covert narrators quote a lot, do not present themselves in the first person, and try to avoid evaluative descriptions as much as possible. Overt narrators resort to paraphrase instead of quotation; they will definitely talk about themselves and therefore use the first person and will often showcase their own opinions. “Pegasian” has a covert narrator and “The Map” an overt one.

*Narrator
visibility*

At this point we feel we should repeat our earlier remark that visibility must not be confused with presence. Invisible narrators remain present, and visible narrators do not have to play a role in the story they tell. In other words, they do not have to be homodiegetic. They can talk perfectly well about things they have not witnessed, as for instance in Poe’s “Masque of the Red Death.”

The narrator’s third property concerns reliability, which can also be represented on a sliding scale from a completely reliable narrator on one end to an entirely unreliable one on the other. As we have already said in chapter 1, a method does not exist to establish reliability in any objective way. Of course a text can contain many signs of (un)reliability. If narrators maintain they have said something when they have not in fact done so, that can be seen as a sign of unreliability. This impression will be enhanced by contradictory statements on the part of the narrator and by confessions of confusion and failure to see connections. If at the beginning of a story a narrator suggests greater skill in imagin-

*Narrator
reliability*

ing things than giving a precise account, that also does not make the narrator more reliable.

Still, the reader might interpret a narrator's utterances in unexpected ways. The above examples of supposed unreliability may be felt to contain a suggestion that a correct and truthful account is necessarily mendacious. In this view a traditionally coherent story is not as reliable as it may purport to be. Textual indications of reliability, such as internal coherence, are therefore not sufficient to decide the matter.

Narrator type does not provide a solution either. Perhaps extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators are more often reliable than their intradiegetic and homodiegetic counterparts if only because the former are more detached and can therefore be more objective. But this is not at all a general rule. Quite a few postmodern narrators are extradiegetic and heterodiegetic, but this does not prevent them from being totally unreliable. Other narrator properties such as invisibility or temporal distance do not guarantee reliability either. In chapter 1 we showed that an intimate link between narrator and implied author does not suffice to test reliability, partly because the implied author is an entity constructed by the reader rather than one that can be mechanically derived from the text. All of these arguments lead us to conclude that the decision concerning (un)reliability largely lies with the reader.¹²²

The first two properties of the narrator—position in time and visibility—are relatively technical characteristics of the text. With reliability one enters the anthropomorphic domain and turns the narrator into a human agent. Structuralists do not want to venture too far in this direction, although, as we have seen, they often go much further than they might want to. However, readers and critics who see the text as a message that is part of a communicative exchange between a sender and a receiver *can* develop such human features. One example of this is the so-called *status* of the narrator, a concept developed by Susan Lanser. Her paradigm is speech act theory, which means she sees a text as a way to create a reality through language. This creation depends to a large extent on the authority of the speaker, in this case the narrator.

Narrator status

The narrator's status has to do with "the authority, competence and credibility which the communicator is conventionally and personal-

ly allowed.”¹²³ In practice this comes down to the combination of “diegetic authority” (which narrators possess on the basis of their personality) and “mimetic authority” (which they develop through their style of narration). The former type of authority comprises social identity, which for Lanser includes elements such as “profession, gender, nationality, marital situation, sexual preference, education, race, and socioeconomic class.”¹²⁴ The most common social identity, according to Lanser, is that of a white heterosexual middle-class man, but this leads us to the ideological aspects we will discuss in chapter 3 of this handbook. Mimetic authority consists of three elements that must be conveyed by style: honesty, reliability, and competence. Narrators can lie and talk about things they do not really know, or they can be honest and well informed. The problem with this list is, first of all, that it can be endlessly extended.¹²⁵ The second problem is that the characteristics in question are often very difficult to extract from the text. How does one determine the social identity of an extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator who never comes to the fore?

Perhaps these characteristics have to do instead with the unspoken prejudices of the reader (who might for instance expect the narrator to be white and male) than with concrete textual features of the narrator. Strictly speaking, this discussion takes place outside the structuralist treatment of the narrator, but one could also say that it exposes structuralists’ blindness. Indeed their treatment is not devoid of ideological prejudice either, and furthermore it displays similar shortcomings: the structuralist description of the narrating agent is sometimes anthropomorphic, it can be endlessly extended, and it does not always follow logically from the wording of the story.

Nevertheless, for a description of the narrating agent readers can definitely let themselves be guided by various *textual indications*. However inconspicuous narrators may be, there will always be traces of their presence. Each description is the narrator’s and betrays that narrating figure’s ways of formulation. If one analyzes setting on the level of story and spatiotemporal focalization on the level of narrative, it is important to check how exactly the narrator describes and formulates this setting and focalization. The narrator of a James Bond story shines through in the many evaluative descriptions of the woods or the city or the secret service headquarters. In “City,” by Wasco, the gen-

*Textual
indications*

eral opposition on the level of story between nature and the city does not entirely determine the latter's specific presentation in the separate panels. As the external focalizer, the visual narrator indulges in special angles all through the page (and in a panoramic view at the end of it).¹²⁶ However, the unique style in which the narrator renders the various buildings and objects also provides us with a key to the somber vision of the future. The bleak city is angular and strange to the point of alienation.

Furthermore, narrators can be discerned on the basis of elements that are not immediately visible on the levels of story and of narrative. Things that have not happened, and that therefore do not belong to the story, can surface in narration because, for instance, the narrator might assign a certain importance to something that could have happened but ultimately did not. Things that characters are unaware of in narrative can also assume importance in narration, and yet again they betray the presence of the narrating agent. They also show that there is indeed a difference between the level of narration and the level of narrative.

In our discussion of the various narrative situations, we have suggested more than once that there are hardly any textual elements leading directly to an unambiguous definition of the narrating agent. One has to combine and interpret an ever-growing number of indications. First person, for instance, does not automatically mean that the text features an intradiegetic narrator. Extradiegetic narrators too can come to the fore in the first person. The choice between first or third person is not even decisive for the distinction between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration. If narrators are talking about themselves in the third person, they are still homodiegetic. In order to describe the narrative situation, one has to consider the entire text with all its embedded stories and combine the numerous relevant elements into a coherent whole.

It is also true that properties of narration can seldom be directly deduced from a textual indication. The use of the present tense does not automatically imply simultaneous narration. Visibility, however, seems closely connected with textual elements such as style and word choice since they betray, and make visible, the narrator. An insistently present narrator usually implies a lot of evaluative adjectives and ad-

verbs, I-narration or we-narration, and a lot of addresses to the narratee. Reliability is much harder to connect with textual elements such as these, and that holds all the more for the status of narrators who keep a low profile. In such cases the narrators' words betray hardly anything about the status of whoever is doing the narrating.

3.2. *Consciousness Representation*

Every bit as essential as the narrating agent is the *representation of consciousness*, that is, the way in which the narrator renders the consciousness of the characters. Of course, he or she might be one of those characters. Rimmon-Kenan refers to this as "speech representation" because it concerns the way in which the words and/or thoughts of the characters show up in narration.¹²⁷ It might also be called the grammar of narration since it involves the search for the grammatical means used by a narrator to represent what is said and/or thought.

As we showed in chapter 1, there are basically two grammatical means: direct mimetic representation and indirect diegetic representation. The first is also called "scene" or "showing," while the second is often referred to as "summary" or "telling." The grammatical procedures used to create these two kinds of consciousness representation are direct and indirect speech. We have already discussed free indirect speech as an intermediary form. Dorrit Cohn interprets the three grammatical procedures in the widest possible sense, seeing them as vehicles for three kinds of consciousness representation: psycho-narration corresponds to indirect speech, quoted monologue to direct speech, and narrated monologue to free indirect speech.

An example of all three of these forms can be found in the previously discussed work *Suikerpruimen*, by Huub Beurskens. One night Patty John is nosing about in the papers of her friend Ruben, "just out of a mixture of boredom and innocent curiosity and a little bit in the hope of finding some academy work because, willfully, she still wanted to see what Ruben could really do."¹²⁸ This is psycho-narration: it uses indirect speech in the broad sense. It does not represent the character's thoughts word for word but paraphrases them. Patty John thinks she has found proof in his papers of the fact that Ruben murdered her ex-husband, Stein. She also thinks he murdered his former girlfriend, Fanny. In order to represent Patty John's thoughts, the text shifts to

*Two
grammatical
means*

*Three kinds of
consciousness
representation*

free indirect speech: “But he already has the death of someone else, of that girl, on his conscience, no? And the coldness with which he had apparently pushed her away, wasn’t that the coldness with which he had blinded Patty John to that ‘loser,’ as he had characterized him offhand? But Patty John, didn’t you yourself drop Stein just as mercilessly and ruthlessly as Ruben did Fanny!? Yes, yes, you’re guilty yourself.” The first two sentences are an example of narrated monologue: they both use free indirect speech. The last two might as well be direct speech. In that case, there are two possibilities: either Patty John is talking to herself in quoted monologue or the narrator is talking to the character, which would be an instance of narrative metalepsis. The first is more likely because the subsequent sentences are written in direct discourse and use quoted monologue to show Patty John talking to herself: “He [Ruben] has blinded me to Stein’s love and to my own love for Stein. Because I did love Stein.”¹²⁹

Seven kinds of
consciousness
representation

As this example shows, the triad is not perfect. To begin with, the three grammatical procedures have to be interpreted “in the broadest sense,” which inevitably leads to vagueness. What is more, some sentences cannot unambiguously be put in a single category. The intermediary forms have been mapped by Brian McHale, who developed a sliding scale that still serves as a reference.¹³⁰ It differentiates the two original poles of diegesis and mimesis into seven kinds of consciousness representation, ranging from the most diegetic to the most mimetic.

Diegetic
summary

First, there is the *diegetic summary*. This is the most rudimentary representation of thoughts or utterances. The narrator says that a character said or thought something but does not say what was said or thought. In fact one hears only the voice of the narrator. “He talked all night, until his wife fell asleep exhausted” is an example of this kind of representation.

Summary, less
purely diegetic
Indirect content
paraphrase

When the *summary* does show some of the content without representing it faithfully, McHale calls it *less purely diegetic*, as in, “He talked all night about the war and his heroics.” Another step in the direction of so-called accurate representation is the *indirect content paraphrase*, which represents the thoughts or utterances faithfully as far as content is concerned but not in terms of style. “He talked about how he had saved a lot of people in hiding during the war” may be a correct representation of the content of an original sentence like “Hell, I saved so

many people in hi . . . hiding, so many people in hiding during that . . . that damned war.” The first passage from *Suikerpruimen* could also serve as an example of indirect content paraphrase. “She still wanted to see what Ruben could really do” might correctly represent the content of something like “I wonder what Ruben can really do.”

Of course as readers we often cannot possibly know what the original sentence or thought was, so we also cannot tell what kind of summary we are dealing with. The example of people in hiding could be a less purely diegetic summary if the character originally had a lot more to say about these people. It could also be a content paraphrase, but it might represent the original style quite faithfully as well if the original sentence went something like, “I saved a lot of people in hiding during the war.” When style *and* content are represented accurately in indirect discourse, McHale calls it *indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree*, which we will call semimimetic indirect discourse. “He said that, hell, he had saved so many people in hi . . . hiding, so many people in hiding during that . . . that damned war” might be an example. Thus, the simple sentence “He said that he had saved a lot of people in hiding during the war” may belong to three different types of consciousness representation: less purely diegetic summary, content paraphrase, or semimimetic indirect discourse.

*Indirect discourse,
mimetic to
some degree*

Once again, textual elements turn out to be noncoercive and can be read in different ways. Consciousness representation is therefore not just the work of a narrator representing the consciousness of a character but also—and often more importantly—the work of a reader trying to imagine the original version of a represented thought or utterance. In “The Map” we read, “What excited me was the thought that it now made sense *to have been everywhere*.” If the reader imagines this to be the representation of a thought such as “it now made sense *to have been everywhere*,” this could be a case of semimimetic indirect discourse. But maybe the young first-person narrator was thinking a lot more carelessly and incoherently at the time, so perhaps the style has not been represented accurately. In that case we are dealing with a content paraphrase. It is also possible that the boy had a lot more going through his mind than the thought represented in that single sentence, which would make it a less purely diegetic summary.

Free indirect
discourse

These four initial kinds of consciousness representation are all variations of indirect discourse, which apparently can be interpreted in a very broad sense. The fifth type on McHale's scale is free indirect discourse. As we have seen, this variation occurs regularly in "Pegasian." An utterance by the riding master is represented as follows: "Little girls who have never personally experienced this heavenly sensation did well not to shoot off their mouths. And it wouldn't hurt to consult a few books on cavalry." This last sentence might in fact be a direct quotation.

Direct discourse

Free direct
discourse

Direct quotation is the sixth step toward faithful representation, that is, toward more mimesis of the character and less summary by the narrator. According to McHale, there is a seventh possibility, which represents thoughts or utterances even more accurately: *free direct discourse*, which differs from ordinary direct discourse in that digressions and supposedly irrelevant jumps in discourse and thought are also represented. The typical form is the quoted first-person monologue, which naturally leads us to Joyce's *Ulysses* again. Leopold Bloom is looking for a bar of soap in his pockets: "I am looking for that. Yes, that. Try all pockets. Handker. *Freeman*. Where did I? Ah, yes. Trousers. Purse. Potato. Where did I?"¹³¹

First problem with
consciousness type
representation

Although free direct discourse emphatically seeks to create the impression that it represents a character's consciousness virtually directly, it is of course "just" a convention. The "real" thoughts are as irretrievable to the reader as the "original" utterances we have just mentioned.¹³² This constitutes an important problem inherent in consciousness representation. The term itself suggests that there are two levels and two phases: first there is consciousness and then its representation within a narrative. In typically structuralist terms, consciousness is considered the deep structure, while its representation is the superficial manifestation of that structure. But what we have said about the story as a so-called foundation also goes for consciousness: it is an abstract and hypothetical construct that often remains irretrievable. There is no way to ascertain what Bloom or Patty John were "really" thinking.

The constructivist
alternative

This is why recent narratological approaches to consciousness representation abandon the mimetic conception in favor of a constructive one. The former maintains the sense of an original, real reality (the words and thoughts of the character), represented as faithfully as possible after the fact. By contrast, the latter approach sees this so-called real

reality as an illusion produced by the passages offering consciousness representation. Making use of a number of conventions, these passages create the impression of being an accurate reflection. This so-called reproduction is in fact a production. Monika Fludernik puts it as follows: “Reproduction is a process of evocation [. . .]. Mimeticism in representation is an *effect*, a fiction of authenticity.”¹³³ From this perspective, the focus should be primarily on the strategies and conventions that give the reader the impression that this production is in fact the faithful reproduction of a so-called real reality.

The crucial—and paradoxical—concept that Fludernik uses to refer to these strategies is *typification*.¹³⁴ In order to give the reader the sense that a representation is true to life, the narrator uses a number of typical, clichéd turns of phrase and stylistic means that are supposedly inherent in oral language (which supposedly has to be faithfully represented): swearing, sighs, derailing syntax, banalities, repetitions, and so on. In the sentence “He said that, hell, he had saved so many people in hi . . . hiding, so many people in hiding during that . . . that damned war,” the swearing and the hesitation create an impression of exact representation. There is a paradox here: on the one hand these techniques create the illusion of verisimilitude, while on the other they are so conventional and stereotypical that they inevitably impoverish and distort the concrete reality (the thoughts and words of the character). The reader recognizes the clichés and accepts them as a warranty of authenticity, while in fact they are fakes. The reader only acknowledges the authenticity of a representation in the shape of a forgery.

*Fludernik and
typification*

That acknowledgment in the end depends on the frame in which the conventions of typification operate. One important example of such a frame is genre: a newspaper report requires a different typification than a postmodern encyclopedic novel. But frames can also be wider and refer to a whole set of social and cultural conventions activated through typification. When a narrator in a story about a restaurant quotes a waiter’s reply, the frame of the setting evokes certain expectations in the reader that determine whether the reply will be recognized as believable or not.¹³⁵ We will look more closely at the use of frames in narrative theory in chapter 3 of this handbook.

In addition to typification, the narrator has other means at his or her disposal to make the reader believe that a representation is accurate and

*Representation of
consciousness and
persuasiveness*

true to life. The comparison of different versions of an account is probably the most common example. At the beginning of *Suikerpruimen* the narrator seemingly quotes Patty John, who reproaches Stein for his predictability: “Never anything truly surprising or even nasty, for all I care; you’re so mortally dependable.” The sentence is in quotation marks, making it seem reliable, but the exactness of its reproduction is cast into doubt in the very next sentence: “She probably didn’t say it that way, but to Stein it could have been put in those words and still could.”¹³⁶ The quoting agent is therefore not the extradiegetic narrator but the character Stein. At the end of the novella the quotation crops up again, this time in a fragment focalized by Patty John. It turns out Stein’s reproduction was very accurate: “Never anything truly surprising or even nasty, for all I care, Stein; you’re so mortally dependable.”¹³⁷ The identity of the quoting agent in this case is not entirely clear. It is probably the extradiegetic narrator or maybe Patty John recalling her own words verbatim. In any case, the strategy is obvious: the repetition of the quotation is meant to convince the reader that the consciousness representation is very precise and accurate.

It is no coincidence that this example involves direct rather than indirect discourse. Since utterances are usually ordered quite carefully, quoting them may be perceived as more truthful and convincing than the putatively exact reproduction of often disorderly streams of thought. Perhaps readers tend to think of a quoted utterance as an authentic representation, even though they do not believe that a narrator could ever be capable of representing the chaotic swirl of thought in language. More generally, forms of representation at the diegetic end of the spectrum seem more dubious than those at the mimetic end because diegetic representations are only rough paraphrases. The intervention of the narrator is so strong that readers are not inclined to accept these representations as exact reproductions of a character’s consciousness.

*Second
problem with
consciousness
representation*

This brings us to another problem of consciousness representation: the relationship between narrator and character. In the case of the diegetic forms—the first four on McHale’s sliding scale—it is impossible to determine to what extent the words of the summarizing narrator are a faithful copy of the words and thoughts of the character. After all, we do not have access to the so-called original.¹³⁸ The one thing that is

certain, however, is the identity of the narrating agent: the narrator is talking here, not the character. From free indirect discourse onward—McHale's final three forms—the problem is reversed. We get a better view of the "original." In theory, then, we should be better able to see what the character "really" thought or said. But in the case of free indirect and free direct discourse, the narrating agent becomes a major problem. Who speaks the words we hear in these two forms of consciousness representation?

Most traditional answers to this question assume that two agents are speaking at the same time: the narrator and the character—a dual voice, in other words.¹³⁹ Bakhtin expands this notion to a polyphony of voices, which he considers not so much the product of anthropomorphic centers such as characters and narrators but rather a combination of various discourses. This creates a hybrid language that rules out any unambiguous identification of a single speaker or discourse.¹⁴⁰ Ann Banfield takes this theory one step further and argues that there is no speaking center in free indirect discourse. Sentences with this kind of discourse are "unspeakable": they are not uttered by any speaker but are indicated and constructed on the basis of a number of syntactic signals, such as inversion ("Would he still love her tomorrow?") and a shift in subject (the "he" in the example was originally an "I").¹⁴¹ Free indirect discourse thus becomes a mechanism of language, a grammatical process that Banfield studies from an abstract, Chomskyan perspective; it is no longer dependent on concrete and clearly identifiable centers.

*Dual voice and
polyphony*

Fludernik's typification is paradoxical in this connection as well. On the one hand, typical turns of phrase make the representation impersonal—in that sense "unspeakable"—while at the same time they typify the speech of speaking characters and/or the reporting narrator. Swearing and hesitation are both typical of a swearing stutterer (the character, let's say, not the narrator) *and* of the linguistic frame to which the representation belongs. Insofar as they typify the stutterer, they suggest that the narrator is letting the character do the talking; to the extent that they are stereotypical mechanisms of representation, however, they imply that the narrator is mostly letting linguistic conventions take over. In this way language, personality, and impersonality come together in typification.¹⁴² The question of who is speaking opens the way for an investigation into the typical turns of phrase that language enforces, en-

abling and at the same time distorting subjective expression. According to Fludernik, this means that the eternal problem of free indirect discourse (who is speaking?) is not of vital importance to narratology.

*Structuralist
solution to the
second problem*

To a structuralist narratology, however, these kinds of solutions are not acceptable. Hybrid forms of language, utterances without speakers, and impersonal expressions of personality go against the structuralist predilection for distinct forms and unambiguously definable centers. Still, that preference is not very realistic, at least in this context. As we mentioned before in our discussion of Dorrit Cohn's views, free indirect discourse does not always allow us to separate the words of a narrator from those of a character. It is especially difficult in the case of a first-person narrator, in which free indirect discourse often makes it impossible to distinguish between the narrating I and the experiencing I. In free direct discourse, which naturally makes use of first-person narration, the problem becomes particularly challenging. Because the narrator in this case seems to disappear entirely, leaving only the character, some narratologists claim that the character should be considered the narrator. In other words, a character is talking about himself or herself and is therefore a homodiegetic narrator. Others suggest that there is an invisible heterodiegetic (often also extradiegetic) narrator trying to represent a character's consciousness as accurately as possible by using free direct discourse. The positions of different theorists on this matter are not always very clear. They tend to overlap, and an individual narratologist sometimes displays contradictory opinions. In order to illustrate this, we will take a closer look at the prototypical form of free direct discourse: quoted monologue.

*The case of
the quoted
monologue*

*According
to Genette*

When quoted monologue takes up an entire book, we might say there is an extradiegetic and homodiegetic narrator at work, narrating from the highest level and carrying on a self-referential speech. Because such narrators want to represent their inner world as directly as possible, the focalization is internal. There is hardly any observation through the narrating I, who is after all nearly invisible: our observations completely follow the experiences of the I as character. In a diagram from *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Genette appears to characterize quoted monologue as follows: extradiegetic and homodiegetic plus internal focalization.¹⁴³

When quoted monologue is embedded in a larger narrative, how-

ever, things change, according to Genette. As an example, he cites Molly Bloom's famous monologue, which makes up the last chapter of *Ulysses*. Molly Bloom is not at the highest level of narration: she is being narrated by an extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator who in the rest of the novel also narrates Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus. Focalization is still internal, but the extradiegetic narrator is now heterodiegetic as well: he or she no longer coincides with Molly Bloom, who is no longer a narrator but merely a focalizer.

So far everything seems logical. The difference between these two interpretations of the quoted monologue can be reduced to a difference in size: in the first instance the monologue takes up the entire text; in the second case it is only one part among many. In *Narrative Discourse*, however, Genette noted that the quoted monologue does not have an obvious narrator "but that it should be emancipated right away [. . .] from all narrative patronage."¹⁴⁴ The quoted monologue, then, would be so mimetic that the reader is given a direct representation of the character's consciousness with the narrator disappearing into the background. This is where things get really confusing: first the quoted monologue is the work of a homodiegetic narrator, then of a heterodiegetic one, and now it turns out there might not be any narrator at all.

Dorrit Cohn vented her exasperation at this lack of clarity in a letter to "Dear Gérard Genette."¹⁴⁵ To Cohn it does not matter whether a quoted monologue is part of a greater narrative or stands on its own. She is interested only in the kind of representation used in the monologue itself. Since the first person is used in those kinds of fragments, they are instances of what Cohn calls self-quoted monologue, that is, the narrator is talking about himself or herself and is therefore necessarily homodiegetic.

According
to Cohn

In his response to Cohn's letter, Genette maintains that the quoted monologue can be both heterodiegetic and homodiegetic.¹⁴⁶ The decision depends on the environment in which it appears: as part of a greater whole or as an independent narrative. Of course this says nothing about the problem of the so-called effaced narrator, the abandoned "narrative patronage."

Seymour Chatman discusses the effaced narrator in his analysis of the famous Molly Bloom monologue. While not explicitly building on Genette's theory, he generalizes the French structuralist's argument

According to
Chatman

of the monologue-as-component. Any quoted monologue, Chatman claims, implies a narrator quoting the thoughts of a character. As the word *quoted* suggests, a quoted monologue necessarily calls for a quoting agent, who is, according to Chatman, “a totally effaced narrator.”¹⁴⁷ Following this line of reasoning, it does not matter whether or not we read Molly’s monologue as an independent narrative. In either case there is a totally effaced narrator.

A synthesis?

Chatman’s view can be connected with both Genette’s and Cohn’s. Chatman’s invisible narrator is heterodiegetic when using a third-person text. That is the case for the narrator of *Ulysses*, who talks about Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom as “he” and “she.” The invisible narrator is homodiegetic when using a first-person text. A quoted monologue with an “I” doing all the talking, without a visible frame narrative using “he” or “she,” is thus a narrative with a homodiegetic first-person narrator. The reader barely notices the narrating I; we see almost directly the experiencing I, whose experience here consists of having memories.

This combination of Chatman’s effaced narrator with Genette’s heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narration and Cohn’s first-person and third-person context suggests that we do not necessarily see the quoted thoughts of a character as a narration by that character. Genette claims that any memory belonging to a character immediately turns that character into an intradiegetic narrator.¹⁴⁸ We think of the memory as a story told by a heterodiegetic narrator when this narrator uses “he” or “she”; when the first person is used, the narrator is homodiegetic.

No doubt this calls for an example. When Blok goes to the men’s room in Brakman’s *Een weekend in Oostende* and remembers past parties, this is a character’s heterodiegetically narrated memory. If Blok had been the narrator of the entire novel, it would have been written in the first person and the memory would have been narrated homodiegetically. The difference between the two does not show so much in the quoted thoughts (which always appear in the first person) but in the frame narrative. In *Een weekend in Oostende* we read, “Finally, he thought he’d pay a visit to the men’s room.” The memory that follows is narrated by the heterodiegetic third-person narrator. If it had said, “Finally I thought I’d pay a visit to the men’s room,” the subsequent memory would have been narrated homodiegetically.

This brief account of a narratological polemic shows that the creation of unambiguous and generally accepted categories remains a utopian enterprise. Any classification proposed by structuralist narratology gives rise to borderline cases and problems that have yet to be—and probably never will be—solved. In many cases the structuralist is forced to acknowledge that concrete stories always upset theoretical demarcations. That does not mean, however, that these theoretical constructs should simply be cast aside. Even when a story transcends theory, theoretical notions still enable us to describe the workings of the narrative more satisfactorily, if only in purely negative terms, such as, “In *Een weekend in Oostende* the narrator does not adhere to the difference between heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrating agents nor to the hierarchical relationship between extradiegetic and intradiegetic.” In those cases where structuralist narratology is limited to producing negative descriptions, other approaches, which we will present in chapter 3, are more fruitful.

*Conclusion:
against*

In a lot of cases, however, structuralist narratology *does* contribute to a detailed analysis of the form and content of a narrative text. The three diagrams we have produced for our discussions of story, narrative, and narration may be used as guides to the narratological study of a novel or any other narrative. They afford not only a global perspective on the text as system but also an intimate view of all kinds of details that might remain unnoticed without the benefit of these three diagrams.

Conclusion: for

Of course the application of the system is only as good as the person using it. The diagrams have to be interpreted, leaving a lot of room for decisions on the part of the reader. Many times he or she will have to make choices that are not necessarily prescribed by the three diagrams or the narrative. One pragmatic decision that will always force itself upon the reader concerns the size of the analysis. If one wants to analyze every single part of a text in depth on all three levels, one will find that the analysis expands endlessly and becomes bloated beyond the dimensions of the story itself. Readers will have to decide for themselves where to stop the analysis, what units to use (for example, chapters or shorter scenes), how relevant certain details may be, and so on. Even in the most rigorous kind of structuralist narratology, there is still room for the unsystematized and the subjective, which are inherent in any reading experience.

CHAPTER 3
Postclassical Narratology

Like most theories, narratology came under fire long before the structuralist analysis of narrative texts had been worked out in detail. The French journal *Poétique*, for example, was still publishing supplements to Gérard Genette's chapters on focalization when in the United States feminist narrative theory was already in full swing. The structuralist dream of a unified, abstract, and universal theory about narrative was soon shattered by late and poststructuralist approaches drawing attention to the inevitable contradictions and self-undermining tendencies in any theory.

Contradictions have always been part and parcel of narrative theory. As Jan Baetens has demonstrated, structuralist narratology was developed in a literary and cultural context that, at least in its highbrow manifestations, was hostile toward narrative traditions.¹ In France the *nouveau roman* famously claimed the era of storytelling had come to an end. The heyday of both structuralist narratology and experimental literature was short-lived. It lasted roughly from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. Then the postmodern paradigm took over, pretending that humans only have stories to come to terms with their environment and their own lives. This was quite paradoxical too. On the one hand almost everything could be considered a narrative; on the other hand the conceptualization and definition of narrative became quite hazy, as did the theoretical foundation and elaboration.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the so-called narrative turn.² It manifested itself in almost all domains of the humanities, including Hayden White's historiography and Jerome Bruner's psycho-cultural studies.³ It led to a proliferation of narrative-inspired approaches across the board, but according to Raphaël Baroni, it reduced theory to a toolbox and subordinated it to its practical use.⁴ In more positive terms and following Marie-Laure Ryan, Roy Sommer says that structuralist

narratology focused on syntax and semantics, whereas the newer narratologies favor pragmatics.⁵ While structuralists excelled in abstract theory of narrativity, newer narratologists have been more interested in concrete narrative forms and analyses. The paradox Baroni points to also has to do with the precarious institutional place of narratology, which is usually restricted to departments of literature, whereas its application is cross-disciplinary: “Paradoxically, from an institutional viewpoint, the theory of narrative appears to be dying, whereas its field of application has never seemed so wide and its utility has never seemed so evident.”⁶ This leads to two problems: the literary theorist does not have enough knowledge of the transdisciplinary contexts in which the theory will be used, and the scholars working in those disciplines are not well acquainted with the theoretical advances.

What is needed, says Baroni, is an integration of old and new, theory and practice, structuralist and newer narratologies. Sommer talks of a “merger” between structuralist and more recent narratologies.⁷ To this plea for an integrated view Baetens adds that we also need a new conceptualization and definition of narrative. As it is, narrative is usually defined in a traditional way, excluding the *nouveau roman* and other experiments, which tend to be relegated to the realm of exceptional (or, as we will see, “unnatural”) narratives. Moreover, those definitions are predominantly based on verbal narratives, leaving aside films, video games, and so on. When these other forms and media are studied, scholars have to transform the “toolbox,” since it was not developed for these forms and media in the first place.

Although we recognize that such an integrative approach and such a re-definition of narrative are important for the future of narrative theory, we will restrict ourselves here to a presentation of existing approaches. Moreover, as we are primarily interested in the practical relevance of these theories for the analysis of texts, we will try to restrict abstract discussions to a minimum and maximize the analytic potential of the approaches we present.

Ever since David Herman’s introduction to *Narratologies* (1999), it has become customary to talk of structuralist narratology as “classical” and to call the later approaches “postclassical.”⁸ There have been many systematizations of postclassical approaches and many characterizations of the similarities and differences between classical and

*Classical and
postclassical*

postclassical methodologies, but one thing on which all of these seem to agree is the importance of the distinction between text and context.⁹ Classical narratology tends to limit itself to the text, whereas its postclassical successor includes the context. This context may take all kinds of forms. It may be oriented toward the agents involved in the narrative communication, thereby re-introducing the author into the field of study and giving the reader a much more important role. It may also embrace wider contexts, such as social class, gender, cultural stereotypes, and prevailing ideologies.

This attention for context need not eclipse the text. On the contrary, it may draw attention to certain texts and aspects that were hitherto left unstudied. For instance, feminist and queer narratology may address texts that highlight gender issues and may reveal those issues in texts that were thought of as being neutral in this respect. Roy Sommer helpfully distinguishes between “corpus-based” and “process-oriented” postclassical approaches.¹⁰ The former consist of, first of all, narratologies that go beyond the classical text (as, for instance, in transmedial studies) and, second, thematically oriented approaches such as feminism, as well as ethnic, cultural, and postcolonial studies. The latter include cognitive theories (focusing on the process of cognition rather than on the actual text) and rhetorical narratology (studying the process of communication between sender and receiver).

Our discussion of postclassical narratology consists of four sections. Roughly, they involve an ever-widening contextualization: the expansion moves from text to communication, to sociocultural context, and finally to everyday narration. We start from approaches that broaden the conception of narrative text. This will include intermedial studies, diachronic narratology, and theories that regard the text as a world (possible world, storyworld). In a second step we will consider the communicative broadening in cognitive narratology, which underscores the reader’s processing of narrative texts, and in rhetorical narratology, which expands the intratextual communication between narrator and narratee to the contextual communication between an (implied) author and a reader. Third, we will discuss narratologies that include the sociocultural context, such as cultural narratology and narrative ethics. In the final section, we will deal with methodologies that study our everyday lives as a narrative process. This will include a brief glance

at the all-inclusive notion of “storytelling,” as well as a longer presentation of natural and unnatural narratologies.

This step-by-step discussion of postclassical narratologies will include an inevitable degree of overlap between the various sections. For example, storyworld as defined by David Herman is a concept that relies on the readerly construction of the fictional world; this means that it not only has a place in our section on narrative and worlds but could also be treated in our pages on cognitive narratology. In cases like this, we have sought to distribute information without confusing our audience.

So much is happening in contemporary narratology that it is simply impossible to discuss everything in detail. Our emphasis on the interpretive relevance of postclassical theories explains why we do not pay attention to narratological approaches that choose to discuss the context but seem to lose track of the text in the process. A similar motivation makes us somewhat skeptical toward the use of the computer in the development of the research field. Obviously these approaches have undeniable merits, but for our purposes they seem less compelling.

*Unexplored
approaches*

Anthropological narratology starts from the observation that fairy tales, legends, and myths from different cultures and periods have many characteristics in common. Following the structuralist project, this approach tends to locate the basis of this similarity in almost archetypal processes and structures such as initiation, quest, and rebirth.¹¹ René Girard, for example, reduces stories to the triangular structure of desire (A desires an object X because the admired B desires that object) and the scapegoat mechanism (A is blamed for all social disorder and expelled so as to restore order).¹² In its more contemporary form, anthropological narratology tries to explain why storytelling is such a fundamental human activity. Albrecht Koschorke argues that the benefits of stories lie in their capacity for the collective negotiation of meaning.¹³ Stories allow for relevant play with the distinction between truth and falsity, and they do so by “turning a state into a process.”¹⁴ The resulting sequence of events and its presentation not only manage to keep a discussion going, thanks to a story’s management of information, but they also create a form of redundancy that will, for instance, help to consolidate a (temporary) consensus. This paradox constitutes an important part of how stories may

*Anthropological
narratology*

help to avoid conflict by “keeping the distance between the real and its codification in flux.”¹⁵

*Psychoanalytical
narratology*

Psychoanalytical narratology explains stories starting from psychological processes such as displacement and condensation and from unconscious structures such as the Oedipus complex.¹⁶ The basis of a story can be found in unconscious desires that end up in the text only after various filtering processes. Examples of these include metonymical displacement (which, for instance, lifts a part from its whole and thus pushes aside those aspects of the unconscious desire that are unacceptable for consciousness) and metaphorical condensation (which, for instance, merges different people into one character).

*Empirical
narratology*

Empirical narratology concentrates on the psychological mechanisms of text processing and almost exclusively uses positivistic methods.¹⁷ Since most narratologists have not been trained for this kind of research, the empirical study of narrative processing has largely been developed by research psychologists. However, their interest in literary narrative is fairly limited. Representative contributions to the field, such as those by Richard Gerrig and by Gordon Bower and Daniel Morrow, seem to imply that literary narratives make up too complex a phenomenon to allow for the controllable testing conditions required by the positivistic approach.¹⁸

Anthony J. Sanford and Catherine Emmott, who aim to integrate contributions on language processing and narrative comprehension in neuroscience, psychology, and psycholinguistics with work done in the humanities, are very much aware of this complexity.¹⁹ However, in their effort to create controllable empirical stimuli, they end up with a double simplification. First, they discard literary intricacy in favor of (at most) a string of relatively easy sentences that are supposed to constitute a narrative. Second, if texts go beyond such simplicity and strongly appeal to the reader for input, the density of this experience is entirely attributed to the author, who is said to program the reader for successful processing: “For communication to be effective, the writer of a narrative must ensure that the right mental models are formed in the minds of the readers at the right time. Forming the wrong one would act as a block to communication.”²⁰ In striving for the disambiguation typical of the hard sciences, narratology might lose its relevance as a tool for the development of interpretations that ideally keep

the complexity of a text intact. In any case, empirical narratology turns the narrative and literary dimensions of the text into quantitative data. Something similar happens in sociological narratology, which is based on oral stories and which connects these stories to the social group in which they originate and circulate.²¹ Still, this approach can be useful in literary interpretation, as we will show in our discussion of cultural narratology later in this chapter.

Contrary to anthropological narratology, psychoanalytical narratology, and empirical narratology, computational narratology does concern itself with texts rather than contexts, but it does so in a way that radically alters the premises of literary hermeneutics. While our approach in this handbook underscores the relevance of close reading for the analysis of literary narrative, computational narratology partakes of what Franco Moretti has described as “distant reading.”²² It promises to theorize aspects of narrative by analyzing big narrative corpora with the help of a computer program instead of the human brain. Next to the analysis of corpora, a broader definition of computational narratology includes “the approaches to storytelling in artificial intelligence systems and computer (and video) games” and “the automatic interpretation and generation of stories.”²³

*Computational
narratology*

Taking his cue from “applied narratology” as it was developed by specialists of artificial intelligence, Jan Christoph Meister develops “EventParser” (a so-called “mark-up tool”), to accelerate the study of events in narrative, and “EpiTest,” for generating episodes and actions on the basis of the EventParser records.²⁴ Path-breaking though his work may have been, Meister acknowledges that “the most important feature of [the tool he developed] is the fact that its analytic and hermeneutic operations are unable to handle any data types which have not been defined in the underlying theory and considered in the design of the program’s algorithms,” but he recuperates this apparent failure by suggesting that “any problems which occur during program development are thus particularly helpful because they identify specific gaps in our knowledge and theory.”²⁵

As it turns out, (classical) narratology often provides the basis for the kinds of ambitious inquiry that are under way in this rapidly growing field. Annelen Brunner has attempted to devise a program for the automatic recognition of “speech report.”²⁶ In a first step, she devis-

es for its various types (including free indirect speech) an annotation system that rests entirely on narratological research and does not attempt to tackle its unresolved questions. As Brunner is wise to mention, the decisions required of the “human annotator” can therefore be “fraught with uncertainties.”²⁷ Free indirect speech in particular is hard for a computer to recognize because it does not have any “indicators that are frequent, stable and clear enough.”²⁸

1. Broadening Conceptions of the Narrative Text

In postclassical narratology, the narrative text has received an expanded meaning. It now includes narratives in various media (see section 1.1), its historical dimensions now come to the fore (section 1.2), and it has assumed the properties of a world (section 1.3).

1.1. *Broadening the Medium: Intermedial Narratology*

In the early days of structuralism, narratologists looked for universal structures that were supposed to be at the root of all narratives, irrespective of their concrete medial forms. So, in principle, classical narratology was meant to be applicable to all kinds of narrative forms and media, including film, photography, and fashion. In practice, however, most classical contributions focused on verbal and textual narratives. This was not surprising, given the linguistic, Saussurean foundation of classical narratology and the widespread idea that the human species had become the “storytelling animal” thanks to language.²⁹ Especially when narrative is defined in a strict sense—calling for setting, characters, and cause-and-effect-relations—language is the preferred medium of expression. Marie-Laure Ryan talks about “the primacy of language as narrative medium.”³⁰ French scholars like Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida in their later, poststructuralist studies did focus on the narrative power of nonlinguistic media, on photography, film, and drawings on a postcard, respectively. But this was not a systematic elaboration of classical narratology and seemed to belong to an altogether different framework. By that time, classical narratology had embraced the primacy of verbal narrative thanks to the founding work of Gérard Genette, who in the early 1970s built his narratology on the study of Marcel Proust’s fiction.

However, that same period saw the beginning of the “intermedial

turn.”³¹ Both in the cultural and the theoretical field, the role of media and their manifold interactions became central. The early, politically inspired media studies of Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong were soon followed by a host of studies, from all disciplines, focusing on dance, opera, graphic novels, video games, and other arts.³² In this handbook it is impossible to cover all the arts and the disciplines that study their narrative aspects. In order to cover the changes and additions to classical narratology that the focus on different media may entail, we have decided to concentrate on comics.³³ The plethora of theories has also led to an immense collection of new terms, which have been used in a lot of different and not always compatible ways. For our purpose, it will suffice to clarify the central terms that contribute to our narratological analysis.

A medium is more than a neutral channel that passes on information in communication. It forms and transforms the content and the communication process.³⁴ As such, it is not a one-dimensional entity. Siegfried Schmidt distinguishes four dimensions in a medium: the semiotic system it makes use of (e.g., music or language), the technological aspect (e.g., digital technology for video games), the socio-institutional dimension (e.g., a newspaper for serial comics), and finally the relation of these first three dimensions with the other media available at the time.³⁵ Following Ryan, we will limit these four dimensions to three—the semiotic, the material or technological, and the cultural.³⁶

Terminology

Intermediality in the widest sense of the word “designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media.”³⁷ This crossing can take place within one work or between various works. Let us first look at the internal crossings. A novel that contains drawings and pictures would be labeled “plurimedial” and “intracompositional” by Werner Wolf.³⁸ However, to avoid talking about plurimediality within one medium, we will adopt the term “multimodal” novel, suggested by Günther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.³⁹ This may raise the thorny topic of the relation between medium, modus, and genre, but we will use the term “modal” only to refer to a medium within a medium.⁴⁰ For instance, photography and drawing contained within one work of fiction are two modes. It might be argued that most media are multimodal. Ruth Page even proposes “to reconceptualize all narrative communication as multimodal.”⁴¹ Multimodality is obvious

in the case of opera (combining text, music, and drama) and comics (combining linguistic and visual media), but it is also part of oral storytelling (voice and gestures) and of poetry (sound and language). If one includes the material aspect of novels, such as the cover design and illustrations, every novel could be labeled multimodal.

A second case of intermediality within one work is “intermedial reference,” or the medial form of intertextuality.⁴² In this case one medium refers to another one, implicitly or explicitly, on the level of content or form, but this does not result in a multimedial (i.e., “extra-compositional”) work of art. A narrative text can include overt or covert references to music and films; it may even imitate the formal characteristics of these media, for instance in novels that imitate montage structures, or in visual poetry, where the text becomes a sort of painting. Wasco’s “City” contains drawings of works of art, exhibited in the streets. These can be regarded as explicit intermedial references on the level of content. They are like quotations.

Second, medial interactions exist between different works of art. The clearest form of this is “intermedial transposition,” in which a source medium is transformed in and through a target medium.⁴³ Examples are the novelization of a TV series or, vice versa, the adaptation of a novel for the screen. More generally, media may be mixed in performances and exhibitions, forming the “extracompositional” equivalent of intracompositional multimodality.⁴⁴ At the outer margin of intermediality one might situate “transmediality.” That term covers all “phenomena that are non-specific to individual media.”⁴⁵ Again, these may appear on the level of content (for instance, themes and characters can be found in all medial kinds of narrative) and of form, such as in metalepsis, which can be found in fiction, film, and painting. One could say that the universalistic aspirations of early structuralist narratology were aimed at these transmedial dimensions, since it wanted to uncover narrative dimensions that supposedly appeared across all media.

Context

The nature of media precludes universal and essentialist definitions and characterizations.⁴⁶ A medium is never simply an abstract semiotic system, because it implies a certain technology, materiality, and (institutionalized) context. As technologies and contexts change, media change. Photography of the predigital age is not the same as its digital version; its social and cultural function is completely different too. It

is no coincidence that media studies came to the fore at a time when the prestige of “elitist,” highbrow art was dwindling. Media that used to be regarded as lowbrow, in the sense of commercial, popular, and simplistic—one might think here of TV soap operas or sentimental photo novels—started to receive serious attention from academically institutionalized disciplines and scholars. Ryan regards McLuhan and more generally the cultural context of the 1960s as “instrumental in breaking down the barrier between elite and popular culture, a move which led to the emancipation of media studies from literature, philosophy, and poetics.”⁴⁷ It is of course a more complex phenomenon, one in which media and context influence one another. As Van Leavenworth observes, “Cultural studies, media studies, and several sociopolitical critical perspectives have led to a revaluing of popular culture artifacts.”⁴⁸

The multidimensional, fluid, and constantly changing nature of media poses serious challenges to narratology, most obviously to the classical toolkit, which, as we indicated, was designed with abstract, unchanging, and transmedial concepts in mind. To assess the usability of narratological terms for the study of media and intermediality, Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon propose a continuum. On the left side they situate notions that are “medium free” (or transmedial), such as setting. On the right side one can find “medium-specific concepts,” such as the gutter, referring to the empty space between panels in comics. In between there are concepts that are “transmedially valid yet not medium-free.” Those need extensive revision if they are to be transferred from one domain (say, classical narrative studies of fiction) to another (say, film studies). Ryan and Thon mention “interactivity” as an example, which is different in all media and seemingly absent from others (such as traditional fiction).⁴⁹

*Challenges for
narratology*

When one transfers concepts from one discipline to another, they often end up being used in a metaphorical sense. The plot of a symphonic poem is not really a plot like in a detective novel. One can study musical progressions, themes, harmony, and counterpoint as if they all contributed to the construction and development of a plot, but the important words here are “as if.” Studies in musical narrative abound with metaphorical combinations of narratological and musicological terms and ideas. Eero Tarasti, for instance, uses A. J. Greimas’s semi-

otic square and Wayne Booth's implied author to turn music into a narrativized communication.⁵⁰ Tonal progression and plot structure are linked, such that modulations look (or sound) like narrative twists.

This metaphorical nature is redoubled when the original concept is metaphorical right from the start. The narrator is a good example. There is no literal or real narrator in a novel, but it makes sense to study the narrative as if it were being spoken by a narrator. If this concept is transferred to film or comics studies, its "as if" qualities become even more apparent.⁵¹ With intermediality the metaphorical character is redoubled once more. If dance gestures try to imitate stills of a film or if they look like paintings, this reference is to be taken not literally but metaphorically.⁵² Likewise an experimental novel combining collage and montage transforms these techniques associated with painting (or photography) and film, respectively. It may remind the reader of paintings and films, but it is of course not the same.

The reader, largely absent from classical narratology, receives a lot of attention in media studies—again in a not-quite-literal way. The reader is often replaced with a viewer, a listener, and, in the case of digital fiction and video games, an interactive agent, a player, or a conarrator or coauthor. It is hardly surprising then that media studies go well with the postclassical attention for the active role of the so-called receiving agent in narrative communication.⁵³ A clear example of this active role is to be found in computer games, studied via cybernarratology.

Cybernarratology

Cybernarratology is mainly concerned with so-called "hypertexts," that is, all kinds of digital texts that collect data in a network in which a (potentially infinite) number of nodes are connected to each other in a (potentially infinite) number of ways. Apart from language, such elements as graphics, sound, and video material can be part of the hypertext. Well-known examples are video and computer games, multimedia stories, interactive texts, and websites. Espen J. Aarseth created the neologism "ergodic literature" for these types of text, "using a term appropriated from physics that derives from the Greek words *ergon* and *hodos*, meaning 'work' and 'path.' In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text."⁵⁴ The delineation and definition of the corpus is open to discussion, but all studies agree on the two characteristics we briefly discuss here.⁵⁵

First, different layers of the cybertext are often visible at the same time, for instance when a mouse click conjures up another text. This can be related to the postmodern notion of the text as a palimpsest. Palimpsests are pieces of parchment that bear traces of texts that have been effaced. When a new text is written on the parchment, the earlier texts are still evident. Even though this image has been canonized by the structuralist theoretician Genette, it is especially in postmodern literary theory that it has become a popular notion, because this paradigm assumes that every text rewrites or overwrites other texts.⁵⁶ Small wonder that hypertext was welcomed as the palpable and concrete fulfillment of postmodern ideals such as network-like intertextuality and the endless production of meaning.

*First
characteristic:
palimpsest*

Especially in the beginning of the 1990s, hypertext prophets such as George Landow and Jaron Lanier stirred up a nearly euphoric mood.⁵⁷ It almost seemed as if the new text type constituted the beginning of a total liberation not only from the constraints of paper text but also from social reality. In this connection Lanier's notion of "virtual reality" is very important.⁵⁸ Hypertexts were claimed to present a different kind of reality in which things are realized that are merely possible in the real world—if they are not improbable or even outright impossible. These prophecies never came to much, and the notion of "virtual reality" lost much of its appeal in the decade after its introduction. In the preface to a revised edition of *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, Ryan declares that the update was necessary because of some important developments in the previous ten years: "The most important of these changes is the disappearance of virtual reality (VR) from the radar of the media."⁵⁹

In some cases cybernarratology limits itself to the design of new terms and metaphors that give narratological discourse a fancy touch but that do not really contribute to the theory.⁶⁰ According to Aarseth, this type of cybernarratology all too often boils down to a terminological trade-off in which cyberterminology is imported into literary theory and terms from literary theory are exported to the study of cybertexts.⁶¹ The difference between the textual and the hypertextual world is ignored, even though the dimensions of time and space, for instance, are clearly different in the two worlds. Hypertexts showcase a visual and in certain applications even a tangible world representing time

and space concretely, which is not the case in literary works. In fact, in the literary text, time and space are no more than metaphors, while traditional narratology pretends they are real—as if these texts actually staged a time, a space, and a world. Aarseth aims to correct these metaphors in literary theory, criticizing them from the perspective of hypertext studies.⁶² This goes well beyond the familiar criticism of the structuralists' spatial three-layered model because Aarseth questions the world as it is construed by structuralist narratology at the level of the fabula. In order to resolve this problem, Aarseth develops a pragmatic model in which texts are no longer conceived of as worlds but as communication processes.

Second
characteristic:
the reader-player

This brings us to the second crucial characteristic of hypertexts: the importance of the reader, who often becomes a player. In most cases this importance is theorized by means of the concepts of immersion and interactivity. Precisely because of their active involvement, reader-players lose themselves in the computer game they are playing or in the digital text they are writing with the help of all kinds of computer techniques. According to Ryan, this combination of immersion and interaction is not possible with literary texts. Literary texts that force the reader to participate actively—*textes scriptibles* or “writerly” texts, to use Barthes's terms—inevitably shatter the effects of realism experienced by readers: they introduce distance and lead readers to consider literary procedures more closely, which disrupts the immersion.⁶³

Ryan relates immersion to the phenomenological approach of reading as a complete conflation of subject (reader) and object (text). She connects interaction with the structuralist approach of the text as a game, a system of rules that induces action. As a combination of immersion and interaction, hypertext would be an object of investigation in which the two traditionally opposed approaches could meet. This would imply a reconciliation of the phenomenological conception of the text-as-world with the structuralist view of the text-as-game. Ryan starts from this perspective on hypertext to enrich literary narratology. She is looking for narrative strategies that are geared toward immersion or tries to find strategies that aim to achieve precisely the opposite effect. She also sheds light on the paradoxical attempts to create the illusion of a hypertext in a text—a short-term illusion of the synthesis of reflection and immersion. In this way cy-

bernarratology increases our understanding of the literary communication and reading process.⁶⁴

Seen from this perspective, hypertexts demonstrate what literary texts do to a reader in an extreme and paradoxical way. In her now-classic study *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, Janet Murray reads the digital narrative text as an extreme version of the stories readers were confronted with before the digital “revolution.” The immersion in a strange world as well as the possibility of interaction are much more manifest in digital text types than in nondigital ones. Murray relates this to an additional characteristic of hypertexts: the ease with which the fictional world can be adapted.⁶⁵

The idea that cybertext may be linked to extreme forms of traditional texts is also present in Markku Eskelinen’s *Cybertext Poetics*, probably the most elaborate attempt to adapt narratology to the needs of ergodic literature. Eskelinen complains that narratology, even in its postclassical guise, developed its insights by disregarding experimental forms of storytelling and by reducing narratives to simplified forms of communication. His alternative narratology starts from Genette and from playful literature found in postmodernism (which, as we mentioned, exploits the palimpsest nature of the text) and in the French OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle, or Workshop for Potential Literature) experiments in a form of constrained writing that turns the text into a play with scripts and rules, very much like the ludic dimension found in hypertext.

*Narratology
and ludology*

In a first step this leads to an adaptation of Genette’s concepts, especially on the level of time, focalization, speech representation, and narration. In a second step Eskelinen proposes a new kind of ludology, one that makes use of some of his adaptations of Genettean concepts but is much broader than any approach focusing on the analysis of narrative. This is not surprising: Eskelinen does not believe ergodic forms like video games can be studied fruitfully by looking at them as narratives. They are much more, and sometimes they are completely different: “games are not narratives or stories (although they may include, adapt and embed elements of them).”⁶⁶ There is a wide spectrum of views on the proximity of narrative and narratology on the one hand and computer games and ludology on the other. These range from “pretty close” to “far apart.”⁶⁷ Since we want to remain close to

our narratological base and purpose, we restrict ourselves to the first aspect of Eskelinen's approach.

To Genette's idea of fictional time ("pseudo time") as a relation between narrated and narrative time, Eskelinen adds a second layer of "true time," consisting of system time and reading time, both of which can be ascertained empirically in the case of cybertext: "system time to account for the varying degrees of the text's permanence (the appearances, disappearances, and possible reappearances of the text and its parts and phases), and reading time for the text's potentially limited and controlled temporal availability and accessibility to the reader."⁶⁸ In addition, Eskelinen posits a third layer, "real time," which he defines as "the real-time textual communication among users within the text as an essential part of its consumption and construction."⁶⁹ These new temporal dimensions influence (the relation between) narrated and narrative time and therefore affect order (Eskelinen lists no fewer than twelve types of order), frequency, and duration.

To deal with speech in cybertext, Eskelinen includes "user's discourse" in addition to "narrator's discourse" and "character's discourse."⁷⁰ Focalization too would have to include the actions of the reader-user, as these influence the access he or she gets to the character's interior.⁷¹ Because of the multimodality of cybertexts—which may combine auditive, visual, and written signs—the narratorial system of Genette has to be broadened to include "a new category of bi-diegetic narrator for narrators that either reversibly or irreversibly shift their position between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic positions."⁷² Genette's system must also become more flexible, accommodating the various types of dynamic change that occur in narrating agents.⁷³ But even after all these transformations, Eskelinen states that narratology needs to be complemented and in some cases supplemented by ludology.⁷⁴ *Oxenfree*, for instance, has dialogue bubbles appearing over the central character's head, thus giving the player a choice of two or three dialogue options—a narrative situation narratology is not able to address.

Narratology
of comics

Comics, or drawn strips, as the literal translation of the French term *bandes dessinées* would have it, are another example of a multimodal medium (combining visual and linguistic sign systems) that has received a lot of attention since the late 1970s and increasingly since the

1990s, both from narratology and from other disciplines.⁷⁵ The research field has become so wide and complex as to preclude any form of representative discussion in the context of our handbook. We will restrict ourselves to some notable theories that are linked to the narratological enterprise central to this handbook, ranging from semiotics (Thierry Groensteen) and Genette-inspired views (Kai Mikkonen) to cognitive studies (Karin Kukkonen). As we go along, we will point to other approaches, but they will remain in the background.

All of these studies recognize the crucial role of the reader, as the art of comics is an art of gaps, of things not mentioned and presented. Jared Gardner expresses a general attitude: “Of all narrative forms, comics are in many respects the most inefficient, a form that depends as much on what is left out as on what is included—and a form that depends on an active and imaginative reader capable of filling in the gaps in time.”⁷⁶ With the reader, the context enters the research field. However, since we focus on narrative analysis, we will not deal with the wider social, cultural context, and history of comics. Neither will we discuss its material and technological side. Of Ryan’s three media dimensions (semiotic system, technology, context), we will zoom in on the first, though the context becomes more important in the cognitive theory we present later.⁷⁷

Prototypical comics are narrative in nature, so the link with narratology is not far-fetched.⁷⁸ In the conclusion to his classic *The System of Comics* (2007), Thierry Groensteen complains that “narratology suffers from having developed in reference only to literature, when its field of natural investigation is in reality the narrative genre, and should no longer exclude the art of visual stories.” He adds that narratology “should tackle narration in confronting the entirety of disciplines of the story. The widening of research into comics (and into the photovel) can only lead to the necessity of modifying or revitalizing certain concepts.”⁷⁹ As a result, there can be no universal theory of narrative applicable to all media. Groensteen sums this up when he discusses the necessity of adapting the concept of narrator in its application to the study of comics: “I do not believe in the possibility of establishing a general science of narratology that would be valid across all types of narratives in whatever medium.”⁸⁰

Groensteen’s modification of concepts is not inspired by Genettean

*Neo-semiotic
approach*

narratology but by a macro view on semiotics. Groensteen labels his approach “neo-semiotic.”⁸¹ He does not share the semiotic concern with defining ever smaller basic units but instead focuses on the systematic relations between pragmatically defined units. His is an “approach from on high, from the level of grand articulations.”⁸² As Hannah Miodrag shows, this break with structuralist semiotics and linguistics follows naturally from the visual sign system, which is not, like language, reducible to minimal units. Images are not arbitrary (since there is a link between signified and signifier, the drawing and what is shown by it), not binary (as in minimal pairs in language, e.g., voiced versus voiceless), and not discrete (there is no discontinuous minimal unit in an image or a drawing). Visual systems do not function like linguistic ones, as there is no abstract *langue* that is turned into concrete *parole*.⁸³

In terms of Ryan’s three media dimensions (semiotic system, technology, context), Groensteen deals only with the first one: “Comics will be considered here as a language, that is to say, not as a historical, sociological, or economic phenomena [*sic*], which it is also, but as an original ensemble of productive mechanisms of meaning.”⁸⁴ This original ensemble consists of units and relations. The basic mode of the medium is visual, not linguistic. Groensteen insists that the image is more important than the word in comics.⁸⁵ It certainly is in our Wasco example, since that contains no words apart from the title. As “narrative drawing,”⁸⁶ the art of comics is a “predominantly visual narrative form,”⁸⁷ with “the image as a base unit.”⁸⁸ Groensteen writes that “indeed, compared to a literary story, the image translates and expresses in visual terms all that it can: characters, décor, objects, atmospheric notations, expressions, gestures, actions—everything, in reality, except verbal exchanges (and thoughts), which the image is not able [to] translate and can do nothing but cite.”⁸⁹

In comics the basic form of the image is the panel. In Wasco’s “City” every tier (or strip, or row) contains four panels, apart from the title and the final tier, which both consist of just one panel. A panel is delineated by a frame and separated from other panels by a white space between the frames (the gutter). In Wasco’s work, however, there is no white space: the panels are linked by the vertical line of the frame, and they seem cramped and pushed together. This suggests an intense contact between the panels, which is belied by the often disparate scenes

and points of view to be found in the panels. For instance, the first tier shows four different locations and four different perspectives. This combination of continuity and disparity is typical of comics, which, as Gardner says, are “always rooted in the narrative structure of shocks, fragments, and discontinuities.”⁹⁰ In Wasco’s case the combined continuity and disparity may further highlight the paradoxical nature of the city: every sight is different, yet they all belong to the same site.

The part of the page that is used by the panels is delineated by the hyperframe, which separates the panels from the margin, that is, the remainder of the page, typically (but not necessarily) left blank. With Wasco, the hyperframe is clearly drawn in black lines enclosing the title panel, the twenty panels depicting the visit of the main character and the final panel showing the skyline of the city. A set of panels makes up a “multiframe.”⁹¹ With Wasco, one can regard the complete drawing as the overarching multiframe and the twenty panels of the visit as an embedded multiframe, showing a visit to a city. We will refer to that central part as the “visit multiframe.”

In between the visit multiframe and the hyperframe, there is a small strip filled with thirty drawings of the main character and twenty-eight of his or her dog. The smallness of the strip and the large number of replicated figures may be indicative of the crowded and claustrophobic nature of the city, while at the same time it may suggest that there are really only two living beings in this environment. It is as if two prisoners are allowed to walk on a very small strip in a confined area. At any rate, the frames and hyperframe suggest a doubly closed space, with no exits. Interestingly the first and last panel of the visit show that the main character needs a spacecraft to enter and leave the city. The geometric pattern of the visit multiframe, containing twenty panels of the same size, enhances this impression of a closed space. The multiframe looks like a perfect table with four columns and five rows. The complete absence of language may be read as sign of estrangement and lack of both humanity (there are no humans apart from the main character) and communication.

Groensteen compares the spatial division of the multiframe to a beat becoming faster, with more panels per line.⁹² With Wasco we have a regular beat, which in terms of musical time signature could be read as four/four: there are four beats in a measure and every beat consists of a

quarter note. That is the so-called common measure, used in most pop and rock music, which again may underscore the machine-like order of the city visited by the protagonist. It comes close to what Groensteen calls “the cadence of the waffle-iron grid.”⁹³ To measure that cadence more precisely, one could look at the amount of time presented by the panels. For instance, three panels might cover only a moment (e.g., someone getting on a bus) or perhaps a long period (e.g., the change of seasons in a year). This is comparable to the classical distinction between narrated time and time of narration, except that the visual presentation here replaces the linguistic one.⁹⁴ Eric S. Rabkin tries to find equivalents to the literary modes of description (slow), dramatization (even), and summary (fast) by looking at complexity (slow), representation (even), and montage or symbolism (fast). In Wasco’s “City” the last option seems to prevail: we get a montage of scenes, leaving out a lot of things, and as a result the pace seems to be quite fast.⁹⁵

With the multiframe we have moved on from the level of basic units to the systematic level of their relations. Put abstractly, all images are held together by their “iconic solidarity.”⁹⁶ They are at the same time separate and similar; they are placed next to one another but they remain distinct, multiple. Phrased more concretely, the relations between panels are “spatio-topical”; they all have their own place (“topical”) in the space (“spatio”) constructed by the multiframe. This positioning can be characterized in terms of form, area, and site.⁹⁷ With Wasco, the form of each panel in the multiframe depicting the visit is square—again underlining the repetitiveness and the closedness of the city space. There are no variations in the panel forms, suggesting they are interchangeable, impersonal, indistinctive—characteristics that might easily be transferred onto the city. The area covered by each panel is interchangeable, as they are all of equal size. The site is, of course, different for every panel, as it refers to the unique position of the panel in the multiframe.

To uncover the spatio-topical relations between panels, one must not only look at the contiguous relations between, for instance, panels in one and the same tier, but one must also pay attention to the relations between distant panels. A panel in the middle of the story may be an echo of a panel at the outset of the narrative. Groensteen calls this articulation of the manifold links between panels “arthrology.”⁹⁸

The contiguous relations are studied under the heading of “restricted” or “restrained” arthrology. The panel is articulated into a syntagm (a combination of the panel with the preceding and the following ones) and further on into a sequence (a larger narrative unit, not unlike Barthes’s functions, depicting, for instance, a complete action).⁹⁹

In the case of *Wasco* the sequence consists of a visit to a city, and the syntagms range from abruptly changing scenes (as in panels one, two, and three) to more fluent transitions that suggest a progression in movement (as in panels nine, ten, and eleven). The two dimensions may be integrated in a reading that calls the movement in this comic abrupt and unpredictable. Although the whole sequence clearly describes a trip through a city, the progression and order of the smaller scenes or panels seem hard to determine, as there is often no discernible path or direction, no compelling or obligatory order. For instance, the order of panels fourteen to nineteen could easily be changed without anyone noticing an anomaly. It seems that the city also affects the sense of teleology and direction.

As it articulates the similarities and differences between panels, arthrology is always concerned with movement and dynamics. This movement is not (only) linear; it goes back and forth between panels. The first panel may receive its meaning only after the reader has looked at the second and the third. Groensteen talks about “retroactive determination” in this context.¹⁰⁰ Many recent narratological analyses of comics, including those by Miodrag, Mikkonen, and Kukkonen, have stressed that reading comics is not necessarily a sequential process and that the production of meaning in comics should not be reduced to an unfolding of elements in a sequence. The eye of the reader sees different panels at the same time; the reading order is often not horizontal and sequential. For instance, in the case of inserts, vertically ordered panels or two horizontal tiers that should be “read” at the same time as the lower one show what is left out in the higher one. Following the French semiotician Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, Charles Hatfield talks of “tabular reading” as opposed to linear reading.¹⁰¹

Comics may flaunt spatiotemporal rules by showing different periods in one and the same panel or by making it impossible to link the spatial setting with any clear indication of period and time. As Miodrag says, “the sheer variety of different sorts of networked relationships”

in comics “casts considerable doubt on the ‘space equals time’ epithet” that is essential to sequence, where progress in space equals progress in time.¹⁰² As we said, the progress in Wasco’s “City” is not always clear, though the general movement and space are clear: we are witnessing a touristic walk through a city. The time during which this visit takes place is probably somewhere in the future, but there is no way of dating it exactly. Nor is it possible to determine the duration of the visit or of the scenes shown in the various panels. The overarching spatial and temporal categories may be relatively clear (“city” for space and “sometime in the future” for time); the specifics of the two, as well as the relations between them, are vague.

Restrained arthrology focuses on horizontal and contiguous relations, privileging traditional narrativity. General arthrology, on the other hand, focuses on distant relations and places panels in a tabular relation to one another. Groensteen calls this articulation “braiding.”¹⁰³ In it, panels that are far apart are linked to form a network in a way reminiscent of weaving threads into fabric. Braiding combines the horizontal with the vertical, the synchronic (the co-presence of the panels that echo each other) with the diachronic (the evolution between the two panels). In Wasco’s “City” the last panel of the visit echoes the first via the spacecraft. It rounds out the narrative, making it almost circular—which the reader may see as yet another confirmation of the closed space suggested by the squares. The craft is absent from all other panels apart from the final one, which does not belong to the multiframe of the visit. The title panel evokes all the panels with the main character and the dog, but contrary to all of these, the two characters are separated (by a road) in the title panel. Maybe this underscores the lack of contact in the city.

*Comics and
classical concepts*

All comics studies agree that the Genettean concepts of narrator and focalization cannot simply be transferred to the study of comics. The basic reason is the twofold nature of comics: they combine word and image, whereas narrator and focalization are designed to keep these separate. Telling and showing are combined, but classical narratology tries to keep these two apart.¹⁰⁴ A narrator in Genette’s sense cannot account for the visual or pictorial track of the comic, and a focalizing agent cannot account for the various voices. As Achim Hescher says, “if the verbal and the pictorial track are considered as one [. . .],

'focalization' can neither account for one nor for the other because no fictional entity from the mediating/transmitting communication system generates both tracks, that is[,] the narratorial script as well as the images (including the speech/thought balloons)."¹⁰⁵

Many different adaptations of the narrator/focalization terminology have been proposed. We have already referenced Groensteen's "fundamental narrator," embracing the "monstrator" and the "reciter." Hescher "rejects the use of the concepts 'narrator' and 'focalization' from classical narratology."¹⁰⁶ As to focalization, he takes his cue from François Jost's "ocularization."¹⁰⁷ This is a term indicating the relation between what is *shown* to the reader in an image and what the character actually *sees*. More specifically, he distinguishes between "primary internal ocularization," representing what a character sees without any sign of that character; "secondary internal ocularization," where we get a glimpse of the person looking; and finally "zero ocularization," where there is no subject attached to the image.¹⁰⁸ In "City" the panels usually show the main character, which is of course not what that character actually sees (he or she would need a mirror to see himself or herself). These would be examples of zero ocularization. Only panels two, three, and nineteen may be rendered through the eyes of the main characters, in the form of primary internal ocularization.

As to narration, comics tend to be multivoiced. Complementing Ann Miller, Hescher takes into account six types of texts in comics: paratext, narratorial captions, balloons and balloon speech, lettering (as in onomatopoeic signs like "boohoo"), intradiegetic texts (e.g., a letter shown in a panel), and nondiegetic tags, or seemingly free-floating comments in an image.¹⁰⁹ The latter usually originate from "the artist-writer," as Hescher calls the ultimate narrating agent responsible for both the verbal and the visual track.¹¹⁰ This complexity of the "verbal-narratorial track" cannot be subsumed under the heading of a narrator.¹¹¹ At any rate, the words in a graphic text are always visual elements too, and a classical narrator cannot deal with that.

Kai Mikkonen seems to agree with Hescher. He says it makes no sense to create "a separate agent" for "narration through showing," as opposed to an agent for narration through telling. The two operate in combination (which may take many forms, ranging from juxtaposition to reinforcement) and in the end derive from "the author as nar-

rator.”¹¹² Mikkonen’s *The Narratology of Comic Art* may be one of the most extensive dialogues between the study of comics and classical, Genettean narratology. He deals with all the aspects we have covered in chapter 2, starting with the temporal organization (where he uses the relation between narrated time and narrating time to decide temporal order, duration, and frequency), moving on to characterization, focalization, speech and thought representation (with an interesting take on the visual means for suggesting the simultaneity of two perspectives present in free indirect speech), and narration. However, in all of these elements he changes, adapts, and sometimes supplants the structuralist concepts to adequately study the mix of words and images that distinguishes comics. For instance, dialogue is more than words in comics; it is also facial expressions, gestures, symbolic signs (such as the “emanata” around the head of a character)—in short, it is embodied.¹¹³ Moreover, Mikkonen also considers aspects that are not dealt with in classical narratology, such as (graphic) style and spatial anchorage of perspective.

Spatial positioning is much more prominent in a visual medium than in a verbal one. Any image in a comic is always seen and presented from a certain angle, which is not necessarily the case with verbal descriptions.¹¹⁴ In Wasco’s “City” the view we get of the main character is usually from a high and quite distant vantage point. If he or she were filmed with a camera from that position, it might very well resemble the kind of surveillance camera we find in every city. We never get any shots from the same height as the character, we never get any close-ups, and we cannot even see the face of the character or the distinguishing features of the dog. All of that creates a distance between the reader and the character. There is no “proximity,” no “alignment,” which, according to the definition of Murray Smith, describes “the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions, and to what they know and feel.”¹¹⁵

In fact the characters are not really individualized; they look like caricatures or types—which may hark back to the historical link between comics, cartoons, and caricature. Moreover, as a result of the distant and high camera view, the characters are invariably small. All of this may underline the fact that the city has become an anonymous world, reducing humans and animals to insignificant and impersonal

beings. Mikkonen discusses a wide array of “mimetic images”—visual means of expressing the inner world or the mind of the character.¹¹⁶ Almost none of those are present in Wasco’s narrative. The visitor behaves like a typical tourist: pointing to interesting sights (panel six), walking about endlessly, relaxing only once (panel seventeen). Whether the visitor finds this glorious, boring, or appalling, readers have no way of telling, unless they take the rather gloomy exterior world of the city as a reflection of the character’s mind. But that would be the reader’s responsibility.

A step further removed from classical narratology and many steps closer to the reader is the cognitive approach to comics, exemplified by Karin Kukkonen’s *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*. As she states at the outset, “this marks a shift in perspective from the code-based comics semiotics of Thierry Groensteen and others.”¹¹⁷ Comics are no longer studied as a code for specialists but as a form of meaning production that involves three parties: the graphic text, the reader, and the context. Taking her cue from the basic characteristic of comics as an art of gaps, Kukkonen claims that the graphic text is a set of “clues and gaps” that incite the reader to activate certain cognitive schemata, which tie in “with basic cognitive processes” we use in everyday life.¹¹⁸ These basic processes are both conceptual and preconceptual, involving knowledge (e.g., of genre, people, the social world) and experience (corporeal, embodiment, and so on). They mediate between text, reader, and context.

*Comics and
cognition*

As we will see when we discuss the cognitive approach in more detail, this mediation is seen as a double process that combines text-induced inferences (bottom-up) with the reader’s activation of cognitive schemes (top-down). Kukkonen clarifies this process through an analysis of three comics series. She studies them as (re)negotiations of postmodern topics in present-day society via the activation of specific schemata. *Fables* conjures up the generic frame of fairy tales, which are drastically rewritten (e.g., turning Prince Charming into “an opportunist and exploiter of his own myth”) and combined with incompatible genres.¹¹⁹ The series shows the importance of intertextuality in the processing of comics and raises the issue of good and evil in postmodern, relativist times. *Tom Strong*, the second case study, activates the schemata of the superhero and does not satisfy itself with the cli-

ché that such heroes are simplistic figments of the imagination. It raises the question of fictionality and reality in the postmodern, panfictional world. Finally, *100 Bullets* incites readers to enter the minds of the characters, especially of murderers-out-of-revenge. It “can be read as a negotiation of ethics in the postmodern world,” a world that has supposedly witnessed the “end of ethics.”¹²⁰

Kukkonen focuses on concrete visual and textual forms—such as close-ups, drawing style, and coloring—not because she wants to lay bare a semiotic code or present a grammar of concepts but because she wants to link these graphic clues and gaps to the reader’s schemata that relate the text to the context. Typically, this link is metaphorical. For instance, “three ‘conventional metaphorical mappings’ can be discerned as particularly prevalent in *100 Bullets*: social life is an economic transaction, social life is a game, and social life is war.”¹²¹ As a result of this focus on readerly processing, classical concepts such as narrator and focalization recede into the background. Kukkonen alleges that “narrators and focalization are generally not as easily identifiable in comics.”¹²² But even though she claims that “there is rarely a discernible narrator in comics,” in her conclusion she admits that a narratology of comics should also deal with the issue of narrators and focalization.¹²³

Wasco and
Kukkonen

Kukkonen’s detailed analysis may activate schemata in Wasco’s readers. Among other schemes, intertextual and generic knowledge seem to play an important role here. The title panel, showing the main character and his or her dog, may remind readers of one of the iconic couples in the history of comics—Tintin and Snowy. This reference may become more compelling when one reads the remainder of the album *Het Tuitel complex*. Near the end of the book there is a six-page album that explicitly refers to Hergé’s characters and stories.¹²⁴ The cover of this album-within-an-album is a transformation of Hergé’s cover, with the name of that author reduced to “H.” The protagonist’s hair style is changed and becomes the same as Tintin’s. The title of the album is “America,” which refers not only to Hergé’s classic *Tintin in America* but also to Kafka’s *Amerika*. The story itself consists of drawings without texts; every page contains nine multiframe (each looking like smaller pages) that abound with allusions to scenes from both Hergé and Kafka. The final page of Wasco’s album is a rewriting/redrawing of

the typical Hergé back cover, combining Hergé with Kafka (in the titles quoted, e.g., *The Metamorphosis*), as well as with the popular Flemish comics author Willy Vandersteen, whose Bob and Bobette are present, together with Tintin and Captain Haddock.

The evocation of Tintin in the “City” narrative and the combination with Kafka (the master of modern alienation) and with Vandersteen (a master of the good-humored acceptance of ordinary life) may induce Wasco’s readers to see “City” as a blend of the strange and the usual, the exceptional and the commonplace. Many things in “City” look familiar: the antennae on the roofs, the Picasso-like sculptures and paintings, the streetlights, and so on. But they always have some estranging feature: the antennae have weird forms, the sculptures are out in the street, and some streetlights look very strange indeed. The story evokes familiar schemata but disrupts them at the same time.

The mixture on the level of intertextuality is redoubled by a generic amalgam. The travel genre is evoked from the first panel of the visit multiframe. The flying saucer suggests the genre of science fiction and/or time travel. The visitors’ walk through the city reminds the reader of the typical touristic visit: one looks at all the sights, visits a museum (panel thirteen), relaxes on a bench (panel seventeen), and finally returns home (panel twenty). Again, however, this familiar scheme is disrupted: by the electric chair sitting out in the open (panel ten), the open sewer (panel fourteen), and the complete absence of any living beings apart from the two visitors. Perhaps this is a futuristic city, a city of the dead or of those living underground. Perhaps this can be seen, in line with Kukkonen, as a “renegotiation of postmodernism in contemporary culture” or more specifically as a reference to the post-human era.¹²⁵

1.2. *Broadening in Time: Diachronic Narratology*

Classical narratology developed its theory and toolkit on the basis of literary texts that were for the most part published after the beginning of the eighteenth century. Of course there are counterexamples: Vladimir Propp worked on a collection of old Russian fairy tales, and Tzvetan Todorov worked on Boccaccio’s *Decameron*.¹²⁶ Genette’s influential conclusions about story and discourse, however, are almost entirely derived from Proust’s modernist classic, *Remembrance of Things*

Past, creating the suspicion that the universals of classical narratology are in fact bound to a specific period in literary history. In its urge to correct what it sees as earlier mistakes, postclassical narratology therefore calls for a corpus with a much broader temporal range, incorporating texts from as many historical periods as possible in an effort to study changes that might go unnoticed if the corpus were to remain the limited set of modern books it is generally purported to be. This extension leads not only to a test of the toolkit but also allows for a deeper historical understanding of narrative as we know it today. The resulting questions are daunting, but they definitely need to be asked. Has focalization been around forever? What about the development of characterization? How has narrative evoked the reader or listener through the ages? These are only some of the issues that a diachronic narratology can tackle in its effort to debunk the grand claims of structuralism and refine the toolkit in the process.

*Earlier work on
the history of
narrative form*

It would be entirely wrong to suggest that narrative theory has never taken an interest in the history of narrative form. Mikhail Bakhtin, for instance, describes the development of the chronotope starting in antiquity.¹²⁷ Erich Auerbach's history of mimetic representation starts off with the elaboration of a contrast between the biblical narrative of Genesis and Homer's *Odyssey*.¹²⁸ In his study of characterization Erich Kahler sees an "inward turn of narrative" that finds its apotheosis in modernism.¹²⁹ Dorrit Cohn's monograph on the narrative representation of consciousness practically contains a history of free indirect discourse (or in her own terms, narrated monologue).¹³⁰ Outside of narratology, period specialists have brought elements of the structuralist toolkit to their own corpora. Excellent examples for the literature of the Middle Ages include the works of Paul Zumthor and Evelyn Birge Vitz.¹³¹

*Explanations for
the new trend*

Still, postclassical narratology clearly features a renewed interest in the historical dimensions of (literary) narrative. In a prominent essay,¹³² Monika Fludernik attributes the new motivation for diachrony to three factors: the rise of feminist narratology,¹³³ which often insists on the importance of context for the analysis of narrative; renewed work (initiated by Michael McKeon)¹³⁴ on the origin of the novel, which showed how fictional and nonfictional texts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries connected with each other and thus prepared the

ground for the genre; and the application (inspired by Hayden White)¹³⁵ of the toolkit to historiographical texts.¹³⁶ Fludernik's own *Towards a "Natural" Narratology* (1996) is itself an early example of the new diachronic narratology in that it retells the history of narrative fiction from Middle English prose to postmodernism through the notion of "experientiality."¹³⁷ The impact of this book on the field of narratology has also contributed to the new historicizing trend.

In her 2003 essay Fludernik homes in on scene shifts from Middle English literature to modernism, starting from the formula "Now let us leave X and Y (in location A) and turn to O and P[,] who were walking/riding/sitting in location B," which she originally encounters in Malory and Chaucer.¹³⁸ While in the Middle English period the scene shift occurs at the beginning of an episode, in the later genre of the novel it occurs at the beginning of a chapter. Since there are many more episodes in episodic narrative than there are chapters in an average novel, the result is a reduction in the number of shifts. Fludernik also finds that "the Middle English formula becomes extremely rare after the seventeenth century and is increasingly replaced by phrases with a temporal conjunction indicating simultaneity," such as "while" and "in the meantime."¹³⁹ Furthermore, from the Renaissance onward narrators use the scene shift to put themselves briefly into the spotlight as the inventors of stories. On occasion these narrators indulge in "metaleptic somersaults."¹⁴⁰ An example would be "But methinks I hear the old shepherd Dorus calling me to tell you," from Sidney's *Old Arcadia* (1593).

*History of
scene shifts*

Genette finds similar examples of metaleptic scene shifts in the works of Balzac and Proust. Fludernik, however, illustrates the huge potential of diachronic narratology by tracing the development of the Middle English formula and showing its refunctionalization for the purpose of irony and sheer narrative daring. In *Orlando* (1928), for instance, Virginia Woolf lets her narrator play around with the possibility of a scene shift in order to delay the announcement of the birth of the protagonist's son.

It is obvious that diachronic narratology requires substantial historical knowledge. This constraint has at least three practical effects on research. First, there is a tendency toward period specialization; second, there are contributions that contrast older and newer literatures

so as to bring out a telling difference; and third, there are collaborative projects to overcome the inevitable limitations of most scholars involved in the historicizing endeavor. We will now present examples of all these approaches in the (relatively) new field.

*Ancient Greek
narrative*

In a series of contributions since the 1980s, Irene de Jong has developed a history of ancient Greek narrative that has been inspired by the classical narratology of Genette and Bal. To De Jong, “ancient Greek narrative” includes “purely narrative genres (epic, novel); what could be called applied narrative genres (historiography, biography, philosophy); narratives embedded in non-narrative genres (the mythological parts of lyric, hymn, and pastoral; the prologue and messenger-speeches of drama; the *narrationes* of oratory); and what Genette [. . .] called *pseudo-diegetic* narratives, i.e. narratives with a suppressed narrator.”¹⁴¹ De Jong argues that such a broad collection is necessary for developing a plausible history of narrative form because in antiquity the same devices are found all across the corpus. Still, they may have different functions. An analepsis, for instance, may be purely informative, or it may be profoundly ideological, when the past is brought up to provide comparative material with the present, as in the work of Thucydides or Plutarch.

As De Jong sees it, Greek literature starts off with a “big bang,” since Homer “developed most of the classical narrative toolkit: the Muses, the *in medias res* technique, prolepsis and analepsis, embedded focalization, or the tale within the tale.”¹⁴² In *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the “Iliad”* (first published in 1987), De Jong proves “the serious shortcomings of the time-honoured dogma of Homeric objectivity” by considering internal (or as she calls it, “embedded”) focalization in Homer’s epic.¹⁴³ For instance, in the verses “On the other side the well-greaved Greeks led Ajax, happy / on account of his victory, to illustrious Agamemnon,” the word “victory,” according to De Jong, “represents the focalization of Ajax, who rejoices about what he *interprets* as a victory.”¹⁴⁴ In De Jong’s *A Narratological Commentary on the “Odyssey”* (2001), the close analysis of narrative devices brings to light an array of details, including the rareness of narratorial intervention and the metafictional dimension of narratorial statements about songs (which derives from the close connection between the narrator and the singers he describes, Demodocus

and Phemius).¹⁴⁵ While De Jong's work presents an elaborate and historically sound application of classical narratology, it does not call for a revision of the universals. On the contrary, it wears its structuralist inspiration on its sleeve, and as such it has been an inspiration for many scholars in the field.

In her book on medieval narrative, Evelyn Birge Vitz is definitely critical of classical narratology. She sharply criticizes Greimas's actantial system (presented in chapter 2 of this handbook), not least because his presentation of the relationship between subject and object is based on the vague notion of "desire." The general ideological problem with modern narratology for the analysis of medieval texts, Vitz goes on to suggest, is that it does not manage to conceptualize "crucial medieval views and mental structures [. . .]. (Prime examples would be the wide implications for medieval narrative of belief in the existence and omnipotence of God, on the one hand, and of the related conviction that life largely defies human comprehension, on the other.)"¹⁴⁶ Vitz herself may be interested in structures, but she finds the early narratological work on story grammar inadequate when it comes to the analysis of medieval narrative.

*Medieval
narrative*

Twenty-five years later, Eva von Contzen is more enthusiastic with respect to what narratology and medieval studies can do to enrich each other. In her manifesto on behalf of a "medieval narratology," Von Contzen acknowledges the new historicizing trend in the field overall but laments that "upon closer inspection, 'historical' in practice still often means post-sixteenth century, or in a huge historical leap backwards, antiquity."¹⁴⁷ An international medieval narratology needs to remedy this situation, but it should not do so by developing a theory of narrative informed by medieval discussions about narrative. Instead it should focus on explaining "the forms and functions of medieval practices of narration."¹⁴⁸

While there are encouraging signs across both narratology and medieval studies, the "alterity of medieval literature" perhaps poses the most challenging problem to the budding new subdiscipline.¹⁴⁹ Since the period in question spans a thousand years, its integration with narratology will obviously require a great deal of differentiation, but this complication has not prevented specialists from coming up with a list of distinguishing characteristics that goes a long way in describ-

ing the thorny issues ahead. Medieval narrative questions the modern separation between author and narrator, in that the former appears in his or her own texts; it features an unusual distribution of knowledge in the sense that characters are often discussing things “about which they might well be clueless”; it offers too much or too little information compared to the norm of realistic transparency; its characters are seldom well developed; its plots include logical breaks and inconsistencies; and it creates meaning through the retelling and variation of traditional stories.¹⁵⁰

*Historical
contrasts*

The alterity of premodern literature holds many clues for a theory of narrative. Therefore, provided contrastive research is based on a familiarity with both epochs, it has a lot of interesting contributions to make. In a typical example Harald Haferland, a specialist on older German literature, develops the notion of retrospective motivation to differentiate forms of finality across the history of fiction.¹⁵¹ Events in narrative may appear to the reader as if they have been inserted to highlight a character trait. When a lover dies and his or her partner enters a period of mourning, readers might feel that the death has been written only to evoke the partner’s capacity for grief. The death of the lover is seen to be motivated in retrospect, in other words, by a later element in the narrative. Haferland argues that only modern readers would experience this as a rather cheap trick, perhaps even as a sign that the author is not capable of motivating character traits through well-organized overall composition.

To discuss the origin and form of retrospective motivation in premodern times, Haferland turns to a Middle High German rendition of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. When Thisbe arrives early at the lovers’ secret meeting place and encounters a lion, she drops her clothes and finds a hiding place. The lion, who has just attacked a cow, rips up the clothes with his bloody jaws. When Pyramus finds the blood-stained garments, he thinks Thisbe is dead, kills the lion, and commits suicide. The fact that Thisbe needed to drop her clothes, so to speak, in order to bring about the events that follow can be seen as retrospective motivation. The narrator of this medieval version does not explain why the heroine did what she did because, according to Haferland, he is so fixed on the outcome of the story that he does not bother.

This is typical of folktales that have been retold for centuries: moti-

ventions do not matter because the teller imagines an audience that is much more interested in what happens than in explanations that go beyond the account of elementary causal connections between events. In the modern novel, on the other hand, authors have evolved to imagine a reader who is keen on precise and complete (psychological) explanations for the sake of the mimetic illusion. For proof Haferland consults Friedrich von Blanckenburg's essay on the novel (1774).¹⁵² This is a crucial document in the history of the genre, and in it the author scolds a contemporary for not explaining why his heroine closes a door, which causes her to experience thirst all night. The contrast between modern and premodern fiction with respect to motivation proves that there are connections between narrative and narration that classical narratology would not be able to fathom because of its concentration on the later part of the canon.

In *The Emergence of Mind*, perhaps the most substantial joint effort in diachronic narratology to date, David Herman explains that the task of the research team was "to trace commonalities and contrasts in the presentation of consciousness over virtually the entire time span during which narrative discourse in English has been written and read."¹⁵³ The collection also includes a theoretical framework for the endeavor. In his presentation of the directions narrative research has taken to describe the experience of the reader who tries to make sense of mental activity in the fictional world, Herman distinguishes between two basic approaches. On the one hand there is the speech category approach developed by Cohn, which insists on the uniqueness of fiction when it comes to the reader's construction of minds. Only fiction can allegedly give us an inside image of a character's mind. On the other hand there is a body of work that questions this possibility of direct access and "gives way to a scalar or gradualist model, according to which minds of all sorts can be more or less directly encountered or experienced—depending on the circumstances."¹⁵⁴ This means that even famous fictional minds such as Isabel Archer's (in *The Portrait of a Lady*, by Henry James) or Molly Bloom's (in *Ulysses*, by James Joyce) will ultimately remain something of a mystery, but it also suggests that we can have a degree of access to even the weirdest minds, inside and outside of literature.

While the contributors to *The Emergence of Mind* do not always cast

*Teamwork:
the emergence
of mind*

their findings in these terms, Herman's initial presentation suggests that the discursive evocation of mind has a less dramatic history than the proponents of an "inward turn" in modern narrative might like to make it seem. It is certainly not the case that there is no early sophistication. In the chapter on Old and Middle English narrative, for instance, Leslie Lockett argues that the texts in her corpus are shaped by conceptions of mind that are nondualist and intrinsically related to the body. Intense mental activity is described as the mind heating up and growing in size in the chest region or, even more precisely, in the heart. Since there was no constant exposure to Neoplatonist-Christian psychology or to the findings of Galenic medicine (both practices that "helped to relegate the corporeal mind [. . .] to the status of metaphor in Modern English"), these descriptions "were intended or interpreted by their target audiences as literal articulations of the mind-body relationship."¹⁵⁵ In other words, fictional texts like *Beowulf* mirrored the mind as it was known at the time and thus reinforced its dominant conception.

Elizabeth Hart in her contribution to *The Emergence of Mind* concentrates on three late sixteenth-century romances, by Sir Philip Sidney, Robert Greene, and Edmund Spenser, to document the move away from the premodern link between *heart* and mind to the modern nexus between *head* and mind. Hart does argue for an important change in the evocation of consciousness from premodern to modern, and she connects this development with the "massive shift in people's cognitive abilities toward reading in particular" that followed the invention of print technology.¹⁵⁶ The growing readership meant that people moved away from "thinking about things to thinking about representations of things, that is, thinking about thought."¹⁵⁷

In the romances under consideration, Hart finds two early indications of the new representations of mind in direct reference, "the moment when the narrator zooms in on the head or mind of a represented human and thus objectifies it as a container of interiority," and (unsophisticated) thought simulation.¹⁵⁸ Here is an example of the latter from Sidney's *Arcadia*: "Then turned he his thoughts to all forms of guesses that might light upon the purpose and course of Pyrocles, for he was not sure by his words that it was love as he was doubtful where the love was."¹⁵⁹ Her insistence on a major shift does not mean that

Hart pleads for the uniqueness of narrative fiction when it comes to the evocation of mind. On the contrary, the signs of novelty she detects in literature are part of an interaction between the new interest in mind and the texts that help to feed it.

David Herman's own contribution to *The Emergence of Mind* undermines the classical image of modernism as a period in literary history in which "the accent falls less on fictional worlds than on fictional-worlds-as-experienced."¹⁶⁰ This shift may be borne out by the increasing use of internal focalization, the development of interior monologue, and a focus on mental incapacity (as with the character Benjy in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*), but Herman submits that the advances of modernist fiction can better be described with reference to "postcognitivist" theories of the mind. From this perspective the famous novels of modernism, such as Henry James's *The Ambassadors* or Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, would become attempts "to highlight how minds at once shape and are shaped by larger experiential environments, via the particular affordances or opportunities for action that those environments provide."¹⁶¹ Zooming in on a passage from James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in which the protagonist Stephen Dedalus goes to confession, Herman shows that the text is first and foremost based on Stephen's routine knowledge of this activity, as it includes opening the door to the confessional, kneeling, and saying the required formulas. In its turn, this construction of the environment leads to a set of perceptions, inferences, and other reactions that determine Stephen's "navigation" of the surroundings.¹⁶² Herman finds similar "action loops" in a short passage from Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.¹⁶³ That text combines two perspectives on the arrival of the British prime minister at a party thrown by the title character. Both responses derive from what the situation affords—in the case of the female character, the possibility of telling her friend, and in the case of the male character, the possibility of developing thoughts that might prove Mrs. Dalloway wrong in having chosen a rival over him.

Insights derived from diachronic narratology could help to analyze narrative texts, even if the focus is limited to a single text. Herman's reading of *Mrs. Dalloway* sheds new light on the interaction of Woolf's characters with the environment, and it illuminates new thematic accents in the novel. Along the same lines, one can read the evocation

Diachrony
and Mutsaers

of consciousness in “Pegasian” through a historical lens and find new meaning in the process. The presentation of the two competing perspectives on the riding breeches could have taken the form of direct quotation in a simple dialogue between the two protagonists—the riding master and the “little girl.” There is of course quite a bit of direct quotation (e.g., “Do they make you go faster? / No, not faster”), albeit without quotation marks, but it is caught in a frame of indirectness that easily allows for access to the minds in action. When the girl has asked her question about breeches in the form of fat, the riding master retreats into personal thoughts, which leads to a brief interior monologue. Similarly, in the final paragraph the narrator reports that the girl understands, and the reader immediately hears the explanation she uses to convince herself.

Historically speaking, “Pegasian” author Charlotte Mutsaers displays a great mastery of the various techniques for evoking the mind at work that have been developed from the end of the eighteenth century onward. In fact her story amounts to a small catalog of these devices, from direct quotation (spoken thoughts or interior monologue) over free indirect speech to indirect speech. Perhaps the narrator’s opinion ultimately coincides with that of the girl, but the ease with which the narrator moves from one device to another can be brought into consideration as proof of a flexibility that the protagonists at first seem to lack and that the riding master never attains. The narrator is able to move back and forth between the various ways to represent consciousness, but the two main characters are stuck in their own convictions. If at the end of the story the narrator’s opinion is seen to coincide with that of the girl, the latter could also be said to have reached the mental liveness the narrator has showcased all through the text. “Pegasian” could not have been written like this until the modernist completion of a long process in the evocation of mind that includes, among many others, the works of Jane Austen and Gustave Flaubert. Through its historical dimension, the story’s formal variation can be validated as a counterpoint to its theme of obstinacy.

*Diachrony
and Krol*

From a diachronic perspective “The Map” is a typical example of the first-person narrative perfected at the latest by Charles Dickens in *David Copperfield*. In examples of this kind of text individuals look back on their past with a certain amount of insight, mostly relating

the events of their lives in chronological order and often judging them in the process. Gerrit Krol does not quite break new ground with his story in terms of the formula, but the classic structure of “The Map” can still be brought to bear on its contents. The boy who was so keen on acquiring the map and employing it “to be everywhere” has become an adult for whom the object has become “useless.” The narrator clearly states that his dream of being everywhere “fade[d] away” the more he traveled. He completely lost interest in and even discarded the map. This anticlimactic action suggests that the man has lost the excitement of youth, but Krol’s use of an old formula might be read as a complication. His choice of an archaic formula implies a degree of (unspoken) nostalgia, whereas the abandonment of the map denotes the exact opposite. Unless the reader interprets the final sentence of the story as a telling variation on the elements of peace and maturity as they characterize the situation of the typical older I-narrator, this contrast remains unresolved.

1.3. *Broadening the Fictional World*

In classical narratology the world in which the narrated actions take place is studied in terms of space, time, and agents. These are investigated as abstract categories, elements in a self-sufficient system and structure. The link and comparison with the world outside the narrative is not deemed important, if it is mentioned at all. Postclassical theories broaden the fictional world by linking it with social reality (through the study of the fictional world as a possible world) and with the world of the reader (by considering the fictional world as the reader’s construction). We will first look at possible world theory and then at the storyworld approach proposed by David Herman.

The “possible worlds” concept, which was introduced in narratology as early as the 1970s, derives from modal logic. This discipline investigates the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of propositions. Ruth Ronen,¹⁶⁴ Thomas Pavel,¹⁶⁵ Lubomir Doležel,¹⁶⁶ and Marie-Laure Ryan¹⁶⁷ in particular have pointed out the usefulness of this concept for literary theory. In order to characterize the modal structure of a literary text in a more concrete way, we will take a close look at Doležel’s classic, *Heterocosmica*. In a further exploration of possible world theory, we will discuss Uri Margolin’s contri-

*Basics of possible
world theory*

bution to the study of character and David Herman's work on hypothetical focalization.

Possible world theory studies the world of fiction along the same lines as any other world, including social reality. "The basis of PW [possible world] theory," writes Marie-Laure Ryan, "is the set-theoretical idea that reality—the sum total of the imaginable—is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct elements, or worlds, and that it is hierarchically structured by the opposition of one well-designated element, which functions as the center of the system, to all the other members of the set. The central element is commonly interpreted as 'the actual world' and the satellites as merely possible worlds. For a world to be possible it must be linked to the center by a so-called accessibility relation. Impossible worlds cluster at the periphery of the system."¹⁶⁸

This triadic model distinguishes between the center of the world (the actual world, the existing state of affairs), the possible worlds circling this center as satellites, and the impossible worlds at the outer limit. The difference between satellites and the periphery lies in the so-called accessibility relation that they have with the center. Possible worlds have access to the existing worlds: they could at one point become real. How this is determined differs from one theoretician to another, but often the laws of logic and time are used as criteria for deciding whether the literary world can gain access to the real world or not. A world in which the logical law of the excluded middle is not respected (for example, when a character is at the same time dead and alive) will be called peripheral or impossible. In this view a story in which an old man suddenly becomes a child would create an impossible world as well. Looking at our three stories, it is obvious that the ones by Mutsaers and Krol are closely linked to our own actual world, whereas Wasco's world is far removed from it, though in some future it may become an actual world. On its own, each story world has a center, a set of satellites, and a periphery. The centers of the worlds of Mutsaers and Krol are much closer to ours than is the center of Wasco's futuristic world.

By studying narrative and social worlds in terms of the same triadic model, possible world theory sheds light on the autonomy and the relatedness of fictional worlds. The fact that fiction as a possible world constitutes an autonomous, closed system means that it can be com-

pared without any problem to another possible world (such as dreams) and that it can even be described by referring to that other ontological system—the existing world to which it relates. Like Umberto Eco, many literary theorists tend to interpret the existing world as a cultural construction.¹⁶⁹ Fictionality is then conceived as the result of the interplay between the system constructed by a literary text and the system available to authors and readers in the form of knowledge of the existing world. The world created by a novel is called fictional because it is seen as an alternative to the existing state of affairs.

For the theory of narratology the most general advantage is the presentation of a philosophically sound framework that considers the narrative text as a system that has its own laws and is at the same time related to the context. In a classic detective novel the resurrection of a character who has been murdered is impossible. In this case the definition of what is possible corresponds rather well to what is considered to be possible in the human experience of reality. In a nonclassic detective novel, like Atte Jongstra's *Het huis M.* (The house M), such a resurrection turns out to be perfectly possible.¹⁷⁰ The murder in question is committed over and over again as well. What is possible in this novel clearly deviates from what is possible in everyday reality.

*Real and
possible worlds*

To a considerable degree, what is possible in narrative depends on the reader's assessment. At the beginning of Louis Ferron's novel *De keisnijder van Fichtenwald* (The Fichtenwald stonecutter), the character Friedolien sees the environment as peaceful and comforting, while the reader immediately notices that it is a concentration camp. His or her knowledge of these camps will gradually reveal Friedolien's problematic observation as a lie.¹⁷¹ David Herman gives the example of a statement concerning Brussels. If a character in a text says that Brussels has many interesting museums, this does not automatically mean the character asserts that the capital of Belgium has interesting museums. Readers who know that Brussels is the capital will, however, probably interpret the remark in this way, and thus they will create a possible world that may very well deviate from the character's possible world. Every reader has a different kind of knowledge and therefore constructs his or her own possible world.¹⁷²

*Possible world
and reader*

The concept of "possible worlds" can be related to "virtual reality," an idea that often appears in the study of hypertext. According to

*Virtuality and
possibility*

Ryan, *virtuality* has three dimensions. First, the term can be considered a synonym of “illusory.” Virtual reality is a feigned reality that gives us the illusion it is real. Second, the concept refers to computer technology. Virtual reality is the world evoked by technology, such as the World Wide Web. Third, virtuality may be synonymous with possibility or potentiality. In that reading, virtual reality becomes a potential or possible world, and in this way cybernarratology can be related to modal logic and the narratology of possible worlds to which it has given rise.¹⁷³ Just as cybernarratology sees the textual world as a palimpsest that comprises different layers of virtual realities, possible world theory envisages the world as a composite of potential and existing realities.

Truth and possibility

From Plato to Bertrand Russell, conventional theories of truth determined the truth value of a proposition by looking at the correspondence with a situation in the world. Therefore, propositions in fictional texts did not have any truth value whatsoever. Nevertheless, literary texts often do refer to reality. In order to characterize this type of reference, the philosopher John Searle described fictional speech acts as making it seem as if they refer to reality. They do not have to meet all the requirements of a normal referential speech act. In this way Searle lifted the usual rules of truth for literary texts, and in a certain sense he thereby rehabilitated this type of text.¹⁷⁴

In pragmatic theory, truth is no longer considered the result of the connection between language and world. Moreover, truth is no longer seen as a matter of everything or nothing. To the reader or hearer, statements can be acceptable and plausible, and in that sense they can be truthful. According to this theory, a proposition can be true in one way or another, even if that which the proposition refers to does not exist. For a certain utterance to be true, the state of affairs that is referred to does not have to exist in reality. Even if one does not know whether the state of affairs is real, the utterance can be considered true. This depends on the extent to which the utterance is judged to function well in its context. If utterances “work,” they are accepted as true. Utterances in a novel that contribute to the plausibility or impressiveness of the book could be considered true. They work perfectly within their context, and that is enough.

Truth and fictionality

This conception of truth corresponds nicely with the antimimetic theory of fictionality, which argues that fiction creates its own dis-

cursive universe in which propositions can be true or false. Internal criteria are sufficient to reach a decision. However, this should not be confused with the traditional view on fictionality as an inherent characteristic of fictional texts. Those texts are traditionally seen as having intrinsic, intratextual signposts of fictionality, such as free indirect discourse and the distinction between author and narrator. Ronen explicitly distances her approach from these so-called “textual-taxonomic models of fictionality.”¹⁷⁵ Whereas the textual models focus on semantics and syntactics, possible world theory takes a broader, pragmatic view in which fictionality is a particular form of creating a world, implying a specific relation between sender and receiver and between textual and real world. “Fictionality,” Ronen writes, “has to do with the relation between a speech situation and its context, and with the degree and kind of commitment of the speaker to the content of his utterance. [. . .] An alternative perspective on the problems involved in defining fictionality would stress that the fictional by definition does not refer to an inner structure but to a type of relation: a relation maintained between what is contained within the literary text and what lies beyond its boundaries.”¹⁷⁶

The world evoked by the literary text may deviate from reality, but this does not mean that it is an untrue world. Moreover, this perspective on fictionality does not imply that literature is irrelevant for extratextual reality. Fictional texts always function in relation to nonfictional texts and can therefore tell us a lot about these so-called realistic texts, as well as about so-called reality. For example, the relationship between historical novels and historiography can teach us much about the ways in which we deal with the past (the so-called extratextual reality).

Apart from this general and context-oriented relevance, possible world theory also enables narratologists to envisage the narrative world *within* the literary text as a collection of possible worlds. The construction and evolution of the story are seen as the interaction between those worlds. Every possible world within a single text is in principle defined by means of a specific modality such as probability, possibility, or necessity. In “The Map” the boy sees the desire to map everything and to have been everywhere as among the possibilities. For the adult narrator this desire forms part of the impossible world, and the failure of this desire is a necessity. The interaction between the differ-

*First illustration:
modality*

ent possible worlds appears to be essential for the development of the character and the story.

The interaction and the relationship between the worlds differ from story to story. In a naturalist text, that which is possible mostly has to surrender to that which is necessary: dreams clash with unchangeable reality. In Willem Brakman's novels this hierarchy is often reversed since the main characters prefer impossible dreams to achievable realities. Coercive reality is a horror, possibility leads to disaster, and only the impossible is interesting. The main character in *De sloop der dingen* (The wreckage of things) aims for the impossible suspension of time. The demolition of his village entails a modal statement: "I consider it a disaster that this Duindorp will be demolished, and therefore it is possible."¹⁷⁷ Reality is the result of this demolition—that is, degeneration and death—"which would make everything lethally real."¹⁷⁸ The different modalities alternate infinitely, without there ever being a final victory or resolution, so the interaction of fictional worlds in Brakman's novel does not lead to the completion found in the work by Krol or works by the naturalists. The reader is offered a story without a straightforward plot or clear ending. The endless alternation of possible worlds lies at the basis of this seemingly directionless story that nonetheless aims to put off the necessary ending and the real demolition as long as possible.

Alethic modality

In order to study the different kinds of modality in a novel's narrative or fictional world, Doležel has developed a four-dimensional system.¹⁷⁹ He characterizes every dimension by means of three terms. First, the narrative world can be described from the perspective of *alethic modality*—from the Greek word *aletheia*, meaning "truth." Alethic modality refers to everything that is necessary, possible, or impossible according to the laws of nature and logic. Necessity, possibility, and impossibility constitute the decisive criteria for alethic modality.

The clearest examples of this are causality and spatiotemporal specificity. A fictional world in which people can fly violates the laws of nature and therefore constitutes a supernatural world. Physically speaking, this world is impossible. However, it may very well be logically coherent and, in that sense, logically possible. The world becomes logically impossible only if logical laws are violated in this supernatural world as well. A fairy tale in which people can fly does not have to be

a logically impossible world. Moreover, alethically speaking, many intermediate forms are possible. Between the natural and the supernatural world there are intermediate worlds—such as dreams and hallucinations—that may be explained in a perfectly logical and natural manner, as, for instance, when hallucinations are triggered by the use of drugs. That which is impossible in one world and for one character may be possible in another world for another character. This situation plays an important role in the definition of the hero, who in most cases is capable of doing things other characters cannot.

A second form of modality in the narrative world has to do with norms. In a fictional world certain things are prohibited, others are obligatory, and still others are permitted. Prohibition, obligation, and permission are the three building blocks of *deontic modality*. According to Doležel, the deontic marking of actions is the richest source of narrativity.¹⁸⁰ An action—for instance, a trip—can appear perfectly neutral in and by itself, but deontically speaking it may turn out to be a violation of a prohibition that may trigger an entire system of counteractions. Typical narrative patterns such as the test, the initiation, and the fall can be analyzed from the perspective of this modality.

Deontic modality

Of course these norms may change in the course of the story, and characters may play an important role in this change. Their importance and status often even depend on their contribution to the transformation of dominant norms. Heroes may demonstrate their power by determining what is permitted and what is obligatory. The world of norms is in constant development because norms are the stakes of a constant struggle. The struggle between personal and general norms forms the basis of stereotypical narrative patterns such as forbidden passion or liberation from a stifling environment.

The third modality for describing the fictional world is *axiological modality*; it deals with moral judgment. In this case as well there are three possibilities: good, bad, or indifferent. There is a constant interaction between subjects (the characters) and their environment. That which characters think of as good can be bad according to their environment. Just like deontic modality, the axiological dimension forms an important source of narrative actions. In most cases axiological modality leads to actions via the detour of desire or repulsion. Traditional heroes will desire what is good, and this desire will stir them to ac-

Axiological modality

tion. Nihilistic characters appear driven by indifference: they find the values of their environment neither good nor bad; such characters do not care for them.

*Epistemic
modality*

The fourth and final modal building block of the fictional world is the *epistemic modality*, which consists of three possibilities: knowledge, ignorance, and belief. The last refers to presuppositions of characters that are not based on the real state of affairs in the story. Knowledge is mostly distributed unevenly in the characters, and this forms an important source of narrative actions. A detective is the best example of a character starting from ignorance and carrying on to arrive at knowledge. A schemer can be said to exist thanks to the ignorance of victims of the schemes. Misunderstandings and false presuppositions are at the basis of typical narrative patterns, such as in a comedy of errors. More generally, the interaction between knowledge, ignorance, and belief is central in narrative patterns, as in a quest, deception, and disappointment.

Interaction

The action of a story can easily be studied as the interaction between the four modalities discussed above. What is possible may be, for instance, forbidden and bad. As long as this possibility does not penetrate a character's consciousness and knowledge, there is no problem. But when the character learns of this possibility and starts seeing it as valuable or good, all kinds of narrative possibilities crop up. A character facing an explicitly formulated prohibition may become conscious of something related to that prohibition, which may paradoxically result in a violation of the latter. An extreme example of this can be found in the following promise: "You can have the treasure that is buried under this tree, but you must not think of the big bad wolf while digging for it." Without the prohibition, the thought of the wolf would probably never have entered the hearer's consciousness, and the prohibition would never have been violated.

*Modality
and plot*

The interaction between the four modalities can explain many aspects of narrative development and plot. This way, the structuralist conception of plot can be improved. Classical narratology usually determines narrative structure starting from knowledge of the ending. This structure therefore tends to be described by referring to events that have actually happened in the fictional world. Nevertheless, things that have not really happened (for instance, dreams and plans) are of-

ten essential for narrative structure. If the narrative text is considered an interaction of possible worlds, so-called nonevents come to the fore. In this kind of interpretation, one takes into account modal aspects that do not occur as real events in the story but are very important for the meaning of the story, as we have discussed in the second chapter of this book.¹⁸¹ The continuous impossibility of a certain situation cannot be ignored, because it can be of vital importance for the things that are possible or even real during that period. *Madame Bovary* is largely driven by the main character's unfulfilled desires, so the conflict between the possible world and the actual situation she finds herself in has to be part of the narratological interpretation of Flaubert's narrative structure.

Modality is also essential in the possible world approach of fictional characters. Uri Margolin's renowned analysis of character finds its "theoretical foundation" in the combination of modal logic with possible world theory: "Modal logic is basically the study of what is to be considered possible or necessary in some world[,] while possible-world semantics is the study of alternative worlds, their governing laws, and the kinds of individuals inhabiting them."¹⁸² From this perspective a character is studied as an individual (IND) in a nonactual world. Margolin puts it this way: "In this view, a narrative is a verbal representation of a succession of hypothetical states of affairs, mediated by actions or events. The IND is a member of some domains of this possible world, and in them, it can be uniquely identified, located in a space/time region, and endowed with a variety of physical and mental attributes and relations."¹⁸³

*Second
illustration:
possible world
and character*

As such, any character can be located in time and space and can be characterized in terms of three dimensions: physical, mental, and "behavioral (action-related) and communicative."¹⁸⁴ This makes the character look like a human being, but there are basic differences too. For one, characters exist only in the words devoted to them: "In fact, they *are* these complexes of descriptions, not having any worldly existence."¹⁸⁵ As a result, they are never as complete as a "real" person. They are "ontologically 'thin' and not maximal, having only a limited number of properties and relations. Unlike actual INDs, they are schematic, radically incomplete, and only partially determinate."¹⁸⁶ Real persons may function as characters in a fictional world, for example,

in a historical novel about Napoleon or Dante, but even then they are reduced to textual and incomplete existence. Umberto Eco talks about “transworld identities,” Philippe Hamon about “referential characters”; to Margolin, they constitute the “actuality variant,” as opposed to the category of completely made up characters, “the supernumerary.”¹⁸⁷

Characters can be recognized only if they have a core that remains more or less unaltered. At the same time, however, they change, slightly or drastically, with every reappearance in the storyworld. Margolin studies the static dimension of character in terms of four conditions. Three of these are necessary: “existence, individuality, distinctness or singularity”; the final one is optional: “paradigmatic or simultaneous unity of traits.”¹⁸⁸ Each character meets these conditions in a different way and to a different degree, thus allowing for the different types of characters proposed in traditional narratology (e.g., round versus flat).

“Existence” means that the character functions as an entity in one or more of the possible worlds constructed by the narrative: “The existence condition is satisfied for a given IND if and only if the text establishes uniquely, stably, and unequivocally its membership in the narrated domain or any of its subdomains.”¹⁸⁹ There are four domains in which the characters may feature: the textual actual world, which is established by the highest-level narrator and which constitutes “reality” in the narrative; the “counterfactual, hypothetical situations,” which run counter to that “real” world; the “subjective (wish and belief) domains of INDs in the narrated domain,” including a character’s interpretation of the “real” world; and, finally, “unrelated subdomains representing stories these INDs read or hear, movies they watch, and so forth.”¹⁹⁰ For instance, in “The Map” the boy’s reading of the textual actual world is channeled by the map, which is at the same time an almost scientific, objective rendering of the real world and a sign of the boy’s subjective wish to cover that world by biking. His evolution entails a shift in the importance of these two aspects: his dreams fade away, and the world becomes smaller, less relevant.

The second condition that characters must meet is “individuality [. . .], the ascription of properties to an individual picked out by a referring expression.”¹⁹¹ These properties pertain to the three dimensions mentioned earlier: physical, mental, and behavioral (action-related) or communicative. They tell us what the individual is like (whereas “ex-

istence” simply told us that it existed), and they do so in direct and indirect ways (which rehearses Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan’s proposal about characterization, discussed in chapter 2) and by descriptions that may be unique to the IND (e.g., name) or generic to the IND’s type (e.g., mortality).¹⁹²

One step further in the characterization leads us to the third condition: uniqueness or singularity. This means that “each IND must *at each point* be different from all its world mates in one or more properties.”¹⁹³ Central characters tend to have a vast amount of what might be called distinctive features, whereas background figures tend to have fewer. Singularity is not just about distinction, but also about relatedness. Characters can be related and compared to others, again in terms of the three dimensions (mental, physical, action/communication). In “Pegasian” the female figure is clearly distinguished from her co-riders: she is an inquisitive “little girl” as opposed to the “ladies” who never ask questions. In “City” the central character could be the only humanoid form left in a completely artificial and inanimate environment.

A final, and optional, condition concerns the possibility of turning the set of characteristics provided by the first three conditions into a unified whole—a class or type. Margolin speaks of “a global configuration or a unified properties and relations complex.”¹⁹⁴ This configuration takes place on the basis of three sources: “intratextual, explicitly formulated models in the discourse of the narrator; intertextual models of named INDs (Don Juan), or recurrent generic models (the suffering artist, the demonic personality, the seer); and extratextual models of an age or society stemming from their encyclopedia (in Eco’s sense) or explicitly formulated doctrines.”¹⁹⁵ In Ivan Turgenev’s story “Asya,” Gagin, the half brother of the title figure, is described as an aristocratic would-be artist, both by himself and by the I-narrator of the story. This characterization may be labeled intratextual, but it also activates the reader’s encyclopedia and therefore comes down to extratextual characterization as well. The same goes for the following description of Gagin: “he literally exuded all the softness and near-effeminacy of a true member of the Russian nobility.”¹⁹⁶ Again, possible world theory studies elements of the narrative world in their relation to the “real” world of the author and/or the reader.

In addition to this static, fourfold aspect of the character, there is the

dynamic dimension. Change can be studied on the level of the character and of the world in which it figures. The two are intertwined, but they can be distinguished to keep the analysis simple. As to characters, their changes may be global and coherent (following a clear logic and leading to a clear outcome, as in the case of someone becoming ever more corrupt and evil) or local (involving different forms of changes and not following a predictable logic). Furthermore, changes may be small or big, as well as gradual or sudden. Using these parameters, one might, again, distinguish and classify different types of characters in a way that would be far more refined than the traditional distinctions between static (flat) and dynamic (round) characters. In changing, characters affect and are affected by other characters. This may take extreme forms, such as in two characters exchanging their personalities or in one character being cloned.

Second, character dynamics can be described as an evolution in possible worlds. If a character becomes paranoid, this development may be analyzed as a transformation of the subjective or even counterfactual world into the textual actual world: what is “merely” the world of wishes and fears is described as the real world. That would count as an example of an intratextual change. Worlds can also change on the intertextual level, as in the TV series *Elementary*, in which Sherlock Holmes is transformed into a twenty-first-century sleuth and his companion becomes a female doctor, Joan Watson. Both the world and its characters are transformed. Again, this may go hand in hand with extratextual metamorphoses, for example, in the transformation of stereotypical social figures or of real, historical persons. The comparative study of the intratextual character and its inter- or extratextual counterparts may draw attention to all kinds of alterations, such as subtraction, addition, substitution, and rearrangement.

Margolin’s model allows for a subtle, in-depth analysis of characters and characterization. It elucidates static and dynamic aspects, and it provides a clear model for the intratextual, intertextual, and contextual study of character, paying equal attention to textual description and readerly processing. Moreover, it can easily be combined with the classical investigation of direct and indirect textual characterization. As such, it is an excellent example of postclassical narratology enhancing classical studies.

In the construction of a possible world, focalization plays an important role. A certain type of focalization implies a certain degree of (un)certainty and (im)possibility. If, in *De keisnijder van Fichtenwald*, by Ferron, the observation of the camp as a resort came from a reliable narrator instead of from a mendacious character such as Friedolien, readers would consider the observation to be more trustworthy. Perhaps they would conclude that in this novel things beyond Friedolien's world are possible. When a reader accepts a novel's nonrealistic world as real or possible, Marie-Laure Ryan talks about "recentering." Normally the actual world is the world of which I am the center; I cannot move outside it, and therefore I cannot consider it just a possibility.¹⁹⁷ If readers are convinced—or carried away—by the text they are reading, they surrender their outsider position and place themselves in the center of the fictional world, which is thus moved from (im)possibility to reality. The text's focalization is one of the elements directing this change in the reader's viewpoint.¹⁹⁸

*Third
illustration:
possible world
and focalization*

But such a form of recentering does not always lead to a long-term or permanent acceptance of the textual world as real. In many cases one recentering follows another, just as one focalization follows another. An unequivocal conclusion about the reality of the represented world is not always within reach. Narrative texts show different degrees of certainty with regard to what is being narrated, and sometimes it is impossible to draw a clear boundary between what the text sees as actual and what is conceived of as a possible world. This is certainly the case in what David Herman calls *hypothetical focalization*. The term refers to an impossible center of observation. Inanimate things such as stones and books become centers of experience in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." In *Een fabelachtig uitzicht*, Gijs IJlander lets a stuffed squirrel observe the action and tell the story. What is made up and told by the dead animal becomes reality in the life of Zaalman, the main character and the taxidermist who prepared the animal. Hypothetical observation is not always tied to a nonactual observer but can be built in via conditional constructions as well, as in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*: "Miss Oneeta was standing on her upstairs balcony, shaking like a jelly; and if it hadn't been raining, Haroun might have noticed that she was crying."¹⁹⁹

*Fourth
illustration:
hypothetical
focalization*

David Herman combines possible worlds with focalization by plac-

ing the structuralist focalization types on a continuum. At one end there is total certainty about what is being communicated, and at the other end there is total doubt. External focalization implies a distance that can be interpreted by the reader as a signal of certainty. He or she may be wrong, as for instance when an uncertain or unreliable narrator uses a so-called omniscient perceiver. Internal focalization moves in the direction of doubt. In the case of a fixed internal focalizer, attitudes and opinions are in most cases rooted in a single possible world, and this may induce a feeling of uncertainty in the reader, especially when the character's observations do not correspond to what the reader thinks is normal. Nevertheless, a fixed center of observation generally raises less doubt than variable and multiple internal focalization. These focalization types typically produce a pair or a whole series of possible worlds, often without any clear coherence or systematization.

David Herman places hypothetical focalization closest to the pole of doubt. With this type the existence of the observer is uncertain, which inevitably raises doubts concerning his or her observations. However, in our opinion a reader may also recognize this type as a very conventional way for a narrator to introduce new elements without raising doubts as to their value. Eighteenth-century novels are crammed with omniscient narrators who from time to time try to make their omniscience more credible by introducing reservations about their own statements. The repeated use of words like "perhaps" and "probably" gives the reader an impression of reliability rather than doubt. Hypothetical focalization can create this impression as well. Fragments with observations by an alter ego, a double, or a phantom may confirm rather than undermine the main character's experiences.

*Possible worlds
and Mutsaers*

"Pegasian" sketches a fictional world in which human beings can fly on a horse. This feature is a possibility that is not really put into question in this fictional world. The question posed by the story is not, Can a human being go up in the air on a horse? The question is rather, Do the riding breeches contribute to this form of transcendence? This problem is the focal point in the struggle between the girl and the riding master. The conflict does not in the first place concern the truth or falsity of a world in which people can fly; it concerns the way in which this world can be reached. Nowhere does the riding master deny that

one can go up in the air on a horse. This instructor merely denies that this is possible without the necessary discipline.

The riding breeches play a crucial role in this self-training. The discussion on the importance of the trousers is emphasized by a variable focalization that remains close to the spoken dialogue. The riding master is convinced of the utility of the riding breeches, while at least in the first part of the text the girl thinks they are superfluous. The difference between the two figures can be described using Doležel's modalities. With respect to the axiological dimension, the riding master thinks the riding breeches are good, but the girl does not. At the deontic level, the riding master maintains that the breeches are obligatory, but this does not hold true for the girl. Alethically speaking, the breeches are necessary according to the riding master, but in the girl's opinion they are not. In the end the battle moves to the third pole of the dimensions. Axiologically, the pole of indifference wins out: it does not matter whether one wears those breeches or not. At the deontic level the pole of "permission" wins out: the riding breeches may be worn, but "a simple straightforward denim pair" works equally well. Alethically speaking, the riding breeches are part of what is possible; they do not belong to that which is necessary. Looking at the resolution from the perspective of the shifts at these three levels, the story eventually chooses the greatest openness possible: the "winning" poles are "possible," "allowed," and "indifferent." In this way the struggle between the two characters demonstrates that many things are possible in the fictional world of this story—probably more than in the world the reader considers to be real.

There is yet a fourth modality: the epistemic one. Looking at it from this dimension, one sees that the story starts from the struggle between a character pretending to know how things ought to be done—the riding master—and a character who apparently knows nothing and constantly asks questions—the girl. At the end the girl does know how things work ("Finally she understands"), but this knowledge turns out to be a form of ignorance. She does not know at all whether ideas or sensations are at stake, but she does know that does not matter. Her knowledge does not amount to a servile acceptance of the insights offered by the riding master, who seems to know everything and who would be able to choose between idea and sensation ("it's rather the

sensation that matters"). The girl's knowledge consists of acceptance of a certain kind of ignorance.

All things considered, the elusiveness of Mutsaers's story could be explained from this perspective as a combination of modalities that are usually kept separate: knowledgeable and ignorant, good and indifferent, obligatory and permitted, necessary and possible. This combination makes a variety of things possible in the story, and it also explains why many elements are left up in the air—literally as well as figuratively. The confrontation of different opinions about what is possible and what is not leads to a combination rather than a selection or a choice.

The "struggle" pertaining to this confrontation is not a noncommittal or abstract display of different possible worlds. The possibilities are not totally free or God-given at all. They come about and they are imposed in a context of authority. The riding master has an authoritative position, perhaps thanks to age (the instructor is, in any case, older than the girl), perhaps also because of experience and knowledge. The possible worlds of the two characters are strongly influenced by the riding master's position.

In the first part of the text the two characters differ not only with respect to their attitude toward the riding breeches but also in their views on authority. The riding master considers the authority conveyed by employment as an instructor to be self-evident. This shows through in the quiet self-confidence with which the master tries to persuade the pupil to wear the breeches: "The riding master would appreciate it if she'd remember." The pupil, on the contrary, is not impressed and has doubts concerning the riding master's recommendations, partly perhaps out of an adolescent dissatisfaction with the power of people who are older. When the riding master refuses to budge from an opinion already expressed and then behaves more condescendingly, the girl becomes more reckless. It does not look as if their ideas about what is possible and what is impossible will ever coincide. The end is not the final outcome of the struggle between the riding master's authoritarian attitude and the antiauthoritarian manner of the girl. It is very well possible that both attitudes allow one to take off. At the level of authority all possibilities remain open as well, and the story refuses to promote one possibility to the status of the "real" state of affairs.

Simplifying a little, we could say that classical narratology could be

said to limit itself in most cases to that real state of affairs. It nearly exclusively pays attention to the so-called factual building blocks of the narrative world, such as events, characters, and setting. The nonfactual can never be approached in a concrete way. Possible worlds narratology provides a theoretical framework in which the nonfactual can be analyzed in a detailed manner, that is, as the interaction between various modalities.

In “The Map” the title object constitutes a world in itself. It opens up an almost infinite possibility that is opposed to the actual world of the village, which is dominated by constraints and prohibitions. There are mechanical and ritual regulations for the purchase of a book, and there is a prohibition against purchasing the map on Sunday. And on Monday the boy also could not buy the map: “I did not have enough money, so that I had to wait until Saturday.” Obligation and nonpermission are the crucial modalities in the world of the village. Deontic modality pushes everything else to the background.

*Possible worlds
and Krol*

The map intensifies the experience of the first-person narrator to such an extent that he adapts his experience of reality to it. He wants to make his world coincide with the map—first with that of the village, later with “a blank map of the Netherlands.” Literally and figuratively, he transgresses the village borders. Deontic modality is not so important here, since the boy does not seem to be interested in the violation of a prohibition. He is driven rather by an epistemic desire, a pursuit of knowledge. He wants to get to know the world and map it. Thus the map becomes “[a] whole table full of *new things*.” This world is literally an outside world, a domain outside the realm of the village. The boy aims to integrate the outside world into a system, a map. That is what he thinks is good. At the axiological level one could say that “good” is linked to “knowledge,” and this knowledge would then be a question of mapping.

The first-person narrator does not always perceive this overlap of two possible worlds—the map and the areas he wants to visit—in the same way. When he is telling his story, the map has lost much of its significance, and his world is no longer oriented to coincide with this map. The narrator has imported the outside world almost entirely into a system, and this is precisely the reason why that world has lost so much of its attraction. The interiorization of the outside world is a desire the

young experiencing “I” pursued only temporarily. The map led to an expansion of his horizon and his knowledge. The young boy’s dream starts to fade, however, as soon as he travels to farther destinations more easily and the dreamed-of expansion starts to belong to his actual world. Knowledge is no longer identified with “good” but rather with “indifferent”: “It had become meaningless.”

It is important to keep track of the narrative situation in this interpretation. When he tells his story, the first-person narrator has already been through the whole process of the expansion of his horizon, and this undoubtedly colors his representation of the world before that expansion. His focus on the shading of the Christian shops’ windows, for example, is directly linked to liberation, which is one of his central themes. The quotation of the opinion on the Paalman couple suggests a normality propelled by gossip. Their routine interaction with a customer indicates the absence of excitement. The actual world of the young boy is clearly distorted by retrospection, that is, by the actual world of the adult narrator. To formulate matters in strictly narratological terms: his focalization as a young member of the village community is determined by his focalization as an adult. The possible worlds of the map and the desire to expand his domain can be seen as the result of the projection to which the adult first-person narrator surrenders in his memories.

Storyworlds

As David Herman makes clear, his notion of storyworld is inspired by efforts on the part of possible worlds theorists such as Doležel, Pavel, and Ryan “to overturn the structuralist moratorium on referential issues.”²⁰⁰ Herman’s interest in the readerly assembly of fictional worlds (which we will further discuss in the following section on communicative approaches to narrative) leads him to describe the topic of narrative analysis as “the process by which interpreters reconstruct the storyworlds encoded in narratives.”²⁰¹ A contraction of “story” and “world,” storyworld has turned out to be a most powerful coinage in postclassical narratology, to the point that an academic journal on narrative has been named after it.²⁰² As a concept, it is more specific than the phrase “fictional world,” since it stresses the cognitive dimension in the world’s construction by the reader.

Storyworlds, according to Herman, “are mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the

world to which the recipients relocate [. . .] as they work to comprehend a narrative.”²⁰³ The creation of such a mental model is absolutely fundamental; without it, there is just no way to make sense of a story. Herman slightly wavers when presenting the reader’s work in the production of the mental model; it’s either an individual “construction” or a “reconstruction” of what was encoded by the author. However, his comparison of it with the notion of a “discourse model” in linguistics, which implies an ideal of collaboration between interlocutors as they draw inferences in a conversation, seems to indicate a preference for a match between the mental representations developed by the reader and the author. The narrative text provides a sort of blueprint for the creation of the mental model.²⁰⁴

The (re)construction of a storyworld involves two general tasks.²⁰⁵ On the one hand readers need to make an inventory of “narrative *microdesigns*” to understand what is going on at each moment in the text; they need to identify states, events, and actions, and they need to have an idea as to how all these elements of the storyworld can be part of larger sequences. For more detailed suggestions about what happens on the microstructural level, David Herman turns to Paul Werth’s text world theory and Catherine Emmott’s description of contextual frames. Werth makes a distinction between “world-building elements” that create a background (such as deictics and referential nouns) and “function-advancing propositions,” which are utterances containing an actor and an action involving a goal.²⁰⁶ Emmott describes a contextual frame as “a mental store of information about the current context, built up from the text itself and from inferences made from the text.”²⁰⁷

While David Herman’s suggestions as to the microdesigns certainly allow for a fine-grained description of the ways in which readers slowly (and often semiconsciously) develop their mental models of the fictional world, they do not result in an interpretive tool. But readers also have to take into account principles for “narrative *macrodesigns*” such as overall perspective and the general evocation of time and space. In addition, the macrodesigns of storyworlds include the principle of “contextual anchoring,” the way in which a text develops an “interface” with its interpreters.²⁰⁸ While many of the reader tasks on the microlevel may seem automatic, those on the macrolevel can be rather complicated, not least because over a long stretch of text the combina-

tion of various cues can allow for quite a bit of leeway when it comes to interpretation. As Herman further explains, with a nod to possible world theory, narrative sequences are not assembled by adding up all the states, events, and actions but are instead compiled “ecologically”—by measuring the results against other possible trajectories in the fictional world under construction.²⁰⁹ An important aspect of the entire operation is Ryan’s principle of minimal departure, according to which readers assume that there is a high degree of similarity between their own experience and the fictional world.²¹⁰

*Spatialization of
the storyworld*

In his treatment of spatialization, David Herman emphasizes that the structuralist understanding of narrative as a temporal type of discourse has led classical narratology to prioritize the study of time over that of space. Work in linguistics enables postclassical narratology to try and set the record straight. Here is a primer of the research appropriated by Herman for the analysis of the construction of space in the storyworld. *Deictic shift theory* suggests that all storytellers cue their audiences to forgo the parameters of the world in which they are processing a story in favor of those obtaining in the storyworld.²¹¹ In simple terms “here” and “now” start referring to the place and time in which the narrative is set. Herman does not hesitate to use a spatial metaphor for the shift in question: “Story openings prompt interpreters to take up residence (more or less comfortably) in the world being evoked by a given text.”²¹² The degree of comfort may depend on, for instance, the complexity of the fictional world.

Herman also turns to semantics, where spatial expressions are said to exhibit a mutual dependency between *figure* (a specific object) and *ground* (a background for the foregrounded object). In the work of Barbara Landau and Ray Jackendoff on which Herman builds, the relationship between figure and ground has led to the description of space in discourse as a *region*, in which the figure is located through the use of a spatial preposition, as in the expression, “The cat [figure] is sitting on the mat [ground].” Language also expresses *paths* or *trajectories* to designate a figure’s motion or orientation (along a horizontal or vertical axis).²¹³ Furthermore, the spatial specifics of the storyworld can be evoked with reference to the opposition between invariable *topological* locations and *projective* locations that depend on the way in which they are viewed. These acts of viewing relate to the narrative macrode-

sign of perspective and may thus become an important aspect of an interpretation of space in a narrative text.

David Herman's linguistic angles on the construction of space do not amount to a coherent approach to the spatial aspects of the storyworld. In one of the most elaborate treatments of narrative space to date, Katrin Dennerlein also adheres to the notion that the fictional world is a mental model. Starting from folk psychology to develop her own notion, Dennerlein first defines space generally as "a container that allows for a distinction between inside and outside. Every space may be contained in a bigger space, and any space consists of discrete smaller spaces."²¹⁴ For her conception of space, Dennerlein foregrounds the opposition between inside and outside at the heart of this relatively simple definition, and she restricts her investigation to objects and areas that constitute a potential environment for figures in the narrated world—"objects in which these figures find themselves or which they can move into."²¹⁵ Of course when it comes to literature, these objects may be fictional.

*Space according
to Dennerlein*

Dennerlein works within a theory of communication as a process of inferences that ultimately establish what the speaker intended, but she does not overlook the specifics of literary communication that complicate this outcome. In order to solve this paradox she uses the notion of the "model reader"²¹⁶ (with "model" meaning "ideal") to propose that space in narrative amounts to a mental model²¹⁷ (with "model" meaning "a coherent whole") on the part of such an informed agent. In order to consider the textual cues that permit the creation of the model, Dennerlein distinguishes between fictional and nonfictional texts. In the case of the latter, real-world knowledge can easily be activated by the model reader to enhance the picture of the spaces mentioned in the text. When the fictional text provides suggestions about real-world spaces, the model reader will activate the necessary knowledge, but narrative fiction can also lead to spatial inferences about non-narrated locations in other indirect ways—characters can, for instance, summon spaces related to their profession (as in the case of a butcher), and certain events and actions will have spatial implications (as when a narrator brings up an exchange between a judge and a witness).

In her efforts to describe the elements that contribute to the mental model of space in the narrated world, Dennerlein divides her attention

between story and discourse. On the level of discourse, she assumes that the spatial component of a particular “situation” (her alternative term for Emmott’s contextual frame) is central to the viability of the mental model, because it will allow the reader to reimagine a situation when necessary. Building on the cognitive notion of an “object region” (the range in which people use a certain object), Dennerlein proposes the “event region” to cover the fact that narrative fiction can create its own unusual versions of such a space. An event region becomes a “setting” (*Schauplatz*) when it amounts to the deictic center of the narration, but that is not always the case.

The text type can be decisive when analyzing the narrator’s management of spatial information, and Dennerlein illustrates this by defining a description as a text type that conveys the stable aspect of, for example, a town square without any reference to a specific event. On the level of *story*, Dennerlein considers the influence on narrated space of what she calls “spatial models” (*Raummodelle*)—collections of knowledge about action sequences and the spaces they include. The institutional spatial model “prison” contains not only a set of distinct spaces such as the gate, the cells, and the recreation area but also typical actions such as the escape attempt and the rounds by a guard.²¹⁸ Dennerlein also brings in generic action schemes to investigate to what extent an individual text handles the spatial choices and emphases contained in such a scheme. Does a contemporary spy novel, for instance, rehearse the genre’s regular preference for broad descriptions of exotic locales, or does it concentrate on the spaces of the story events themselves? When it comes to the physical characteristics of narrated space, Dennerlein falls back on her definition of space as an environment for human figures to emphasize the centrality of the classical axes of experience (up/down, left/right, and forward/backward), which lead to the prominent indication of relative positions.

*Storyworld
and Wasco*

The storyworld of Wasco’s “City” is strongly determined by the first panel after the title, in which a little spaceship seems to have just landed in an urban environment. Since the protagonist and his or her dog seem to have come from afar (perhaps even from another planet), they are quickly understood to be exploring what to them (and by extension the reader) might well be a new locale. The fact that they fly away at the end reinforces the idea that they might have come on a recon-

naissance mission or at least that they are interested in the city. While the action scheme of a city visit from outer space (to which the opening and closing panels appeal) is relatively simple and familiar, the city itself is so out of the ordinary that its strangeness comes to dominate the storyworld.

This is a weird place indeed. Panel one already has two special walls and an entrance without an actual door.²¹⁹ Panel two shows a sidewalk that crosses the street, probably making it hard for cars to pass by. Maybe these streets are not meant for cars at all; in panel twelve the pointed obstacles on the sidewalk oblige the visitors to walk in the “street,” where there are also big works of art, and in panel seventeen there is a bench in the street instead of on the sidewalk. Panel two also features two uncovered holes in the sidewalks, and part of a building seems to have been carved out to accommodate one of them. Holes like this return in panels four, eight, fifteen, and seventeen, and in panel nineteen the end of what could be a spire even protrudes from one of them. What are they for? A sequence of holes occupies the place for a crosswalk in panel four, and in panel seventeen they are also placed in the middle of a “street.” Do they constitute an intentional hazard, or is this reaction on our part the consideration of readers who are stuck in the functionality of a normal city and motivate an aspect of their storyworld for “City” accordingly?

Another fascinating characteristic of Wasco’s city is its system of walkways. First seen in panel three as a flat passage above the street from one building to another (and clearly not meant for a cold climate), they become steeper and more challenging as the boy or girl and the dog move along; in panel eleven the walkway even looks like a slide. There are also strangely pointed buildings, bizarre sculptures, entire buildings on roofs, and an electric chair on top of a tower (panel ten) but hardly any signs of life. If what stands behind the wall in panel fifteen are trees or tall plants, it looks like they are dead, and the same is true of the vegetation on the space next to the wall in panel sixteen.

The emptiness of the town already becomes evident in panels two and three, from which the visitors and possible inhabitants are absent (but of course these panels could be what the visitors see at the outset of their walk). Still, in panel six the protagonist points to a bird perched high up on a building, and in the next panel a bird is flying in

the air. Moreover, in panel fourteen there is something brown flowing into what could be an open sewer, which might suggest life in the city is simply hidden from view. Perhaps the visitors have landed at the time of the siesta and maybe the whole town will soon awaken. Many roofs sport various kinds of antennas, which might capture data for humans, and the panorama in the wide bottom panel has five smokestacks, which also suggest some form of human activity. The small plant in a window on the left side of the panorama panel could be dead, but that is not entirely clear.

What is more important is that the city is clean, which the reader may gradually understand as a decisive confirmation of human presence. In that case the strangest aspect of the storyworld is the fact that the path of the visitors through the city remains unperturbed. The visit from outer space that is part of our cultural repertoire typically contains some form of conflict. Otherness and normality are bound to clash. Here, however, the visitors have all the time in the world to take everything in, and in panel seventeen they are even seen to rest on a bench before returning to their spaceship. So, what can readers make of this calm in the strange storyworld they are bound to construct? Is it deceptive—did the information coming in through the antennas warn the local population about the visit, so that they could hide inside? The sophistication of their architecture and their art certainly doesn't rule out this possibility, and the joint appearance of Christian and Muslim symbols (the cross and the crescent moon) on top of the wall in panel fifteen and of the building for worship on one of the roofs in the final panorama also suggests that they have a knack for keeping the peace. But what about that wired chair in panel ten? With its connotation of death, doesn't it confirm the treacherousness of the holes all over the city, holes in which people can easily disappear? Or has the entire population of the city perhaps vanished into these holes, to crawl out again only when the strangers have disappeared?

A graphic narrative such as "City" suggests that the notion of storyworld is useful precisely because it highlights the gaps a reader has to fill in order to process a story in a more or less coherent and satisfying way. The mental model of the city in "City" derives from the interaction of event and environment as it activates the reader's knowledge. Contrary to Dennerlein, we have shown that Wasco's text makes

it difficult to describe the model reader she has envisaged. The questions in our interpretation above cannot get definitive answers. While Dennerlein's proposals for a narratology of space are more elaborate and precise than David Herman's suggestion about spatialization and the construction of the storyworld, his emphasis on the individual reader's contribution seems more appropriate for a theory of narrative that wants to incorporate the mental models involved in the act of reading.

2. Communicative Approaches

Telling stories is a form of communication. In classical narratology the study of narrative communication was restricted to the interaction between fictional agents such as the narrator, the character, and the narratee. Reference to the real author and reader was considered unscientific, since science deals with abstract and universal structures, not with concrete and contextualized agents. Postclassical narratology has a different view on science and has turned its attention to the author and the reader and their contexts in an effort to grasp the message of the text. Roman Jakobson's communicative scheme, linking sender and receiver by means of the text and the context, is never far away in these approaches.²²⁰

More generally, two frames of reference appear time and again: rhetorics and pragmatics. Rhetorics considers a story as an attempt to persuade the reader by means of all kinds of devices. These devices themselves are no longer analyzed in their own right—as in structuralism—but they are studied in terms of the speaker's intention, as well as their orientation to and effects on the readers. Insecure narrators may have different intentions: perhaps they want to make their readers insecure as well, or they may want to seduce the readers or make them curious. The nature, meaning, and function of a narrative strategy become clear only when these effects are taken into account. It is no longer sufficient to limit oneself, as a structuralist would, to the relationship between the narrator and the fictional universe.

Ross Chambers, for instance, sees the interaction between text and reader as a form of seduction. Narrative techniques aim to seduce the reader, who adapts these techniques to his or her own desires. Texts become readable only by the transaction between seduction and desire, a process in which narrative strategies and characterization play

a decisive role. In this transaction the text attains its value, and the reader assumes his or her responsibility with regard to the text by responding appropriately to the seduction strategies. What amounts to an appropriate response is partly thematized in the story, which indicates through characters and narrators what the good listener or reader looks like. Chambers considers, for instance, the character of Félicité from Flaubert's *Un cœur simple* as a role model for the reader.²²¹ But the "appropriate" reaction is partly determined as well by what readers themselves find adequate. However, in this approach the reader is never absolutely free. He or she has to take into consideration not only the text but also the intention of its author. This leads to pragmatics, which studies a text as a form of communication, with a sender, a message, and a receiver. The interaction between these three communicative agents is the core business of rhetorical narratology.

2.1. Rhetorical Narratology

James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz, undoubtedly the most influential proponents of rhetorical narratology, define narrative "as a purposive communication of a certain kind from one person (or group of persons) to one or more others. More specifically, our default starting point is the following skeletal definition: *Narrative is somebody telling somebody else, on some occasion, and for some purposes, that something happened to someone or something.*"²²² This definition clearly builds on the pragmatic and rhetorical traditions we have just mentioned. To understand narrative from this perspective, one must study the "feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response. In other words, our approach assumes that texts are designed by authors (consciously or not) to affect readers in particular ways[,] that those authorial designs are conveyed through the occasions, words, techniques, structures, forms, and dialogic relations of texts as well as the genres and conventions readers use to understand them."²²³

Sender,
message,
receiver

For rhetorical narratology, the balancing of sender, text, and reader is fundamental to the production and interpretation of narrative. None of these three agents should be studied in isolation. The text does not constitute an autonomous world, but it is a message that contains traces of the author's intentions and signposts for the benefit of the reader.

Various concepts have been proposed to make the critic's balancing act more concrete. The most famous one is undoubtedly the "implied author," which we discussed in chapter 1. Phelan defines the implied author as "the consciousness responsible for the choices that create the narrative text as 'these words in this order' and that imbues the text with his or her values. One important activity of rhetorical reading is constructing a sense of the implied author."²²⁴

This construction should be in line with the intentions of the (implied) author. If that is the case, the reader is part of what Rabinowitz calls the "authorial audience," a hypothetical and ideal audience that the author had in mind while composing the text: "Authors are forced to guess; they design their books rhetorically for some more or less specific hypothetical audience, which I call the authorial audience. Artistic choices are based upon these assumptions—conscious or unconscious—about readers, and to a certain extent, artistic success depends upon their shrewdness, on the degree to which actual and authorial audience overlap."²²⁵ The same goes for the success of the reader's interpretation: a reading is successful only if the actual audience nearly coincides with the authorial audience.

Clearly, rhetorical narratology is normative: it proposes norms for the successful telling and interpreting of stories. The authorial intention may be the central normative aspect, but it is itself not beyond criticism. Authors may fail to express their intention successfully. More generally, intention is the beginning of creation and interpretation, but it needs to be evaluated too: "once you decide to take a rhetorical perspective, the best way to make initial sense of texts is to treat them as if they are intended to be made sense of—and then, once we've reconstructed that multidimensional sense, we can take the next step of evaluating the author's communication."²²⁶ For instance, Phelan and Rabinowitz "greatly admire" in some passages of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* "Twain's handling of the relationships among author, narrator, and audience," whereas they criticize "Twain's far less successful narration" in other places.²²⁷

This normative and balancing approach goes hand in hand with the idea of narrative as a pact between sender and receiver. Rabinowitz describes this contract in terms of rules the reader has to follow in order to re-create authorial intentions. First, the rules of *notice*: a reader pays

attention only to certain aspects of the text; others are often simply ignored. Second, there are the rules of *signification*, which are used by the reader to assign a (possibly symbolic) meaning to the aspects that attract his or her attention. This consists of connecting these aspects to the reader's everyday experience by interpreting, for example, characters as if they were actual human beings with a specific psychological profile. Third, the reader uses the rules of *configuration* to connect different textual fragments to each other. This creates patterns that are neither exclusively textual nor exclusively determined by the reader's expectations but are instead the results of a fusion between the two. Finally, the reader applies the rules of *coherence* to transform the text into a coherent whole that nevertheless leaves room for paradoxes and deviations. These rules function as a kind of contract between author and reader. If they follow different rules, the creation and/or interpretation cannot be successful.²²⁸

To apply these rules, readers have to look for textual traces left by the implied author and aimed at the authorial audience. Rhetorical narratology has not only proposed concepts relating to the sender (e.g., "implied author") and the receiver (e.g., "authorial audience") but has also specified the way the text can steer the communication between its sender and receiver. Most famously, Phelan has distinguished between mimetic, thematic, and synthetic aspects of the narrative. These aspects can be found on the level of narrative components, such as character and setting, but they also imply a specific attitude toward them on the part of the reader.

*Mimetic,
thematic,
synthetic*

As to the first level, Phelan describes the three components of character as "the mimetic (character as person), the thematic (character as idea), and the synthetic (character as artificial construct)."²²⁹ The mimetic component is defined as "that component of character directed to its imitation of a possible person. It also refers to that component of fictional narrative concerned with imitating the world beyond the fiction, what we typically call reality."²³⁰ The thematic dimension designates "that component of character directed to its representative or ideational function; more generally, that component of a narrative text concerned with making statements, taking ideological positions, teaching readers truths."²³¹ The synthetic, finally, refers to "that component of character directed to its role as artificial construct in the

larger construction of the text; more generally, the constructedness of a text as an object.”²³²

These dimensions imply a particular stance on the part of the reader. The reader focusing on the mimetic aspect accepts the fictional world as real. He or she is part of what Rabinowitz and Phelan call the “narrative audience.”²³³ The authorial audience, on the other hand, focuses on the synthetic dimension: it zooms in on the construction of the narrative world and on the principles governing it, that is, it aligns itself with the authorial project and intention: “The authorial audience takes on the beliefs and knowledge that the author assumes it has, including the knowledge that it is reading a constructed text.”²³⁴ Readers paying attention to the thematic component tend to go for the ideas and ideology of the text.

Of course the different attitudes usually go together. The “actual audience,” that is, the empirical readers, embraces both the authorial and the narrative audience. It is a matter of stress and degree, not of exclusivity. The authorial audience seems to have the lead here, as its respect for the authorial construction necessarily implies an awareness not just of the synthetic but also of the mimetic and thematic dimensions.²³⁵ Compared to the reader who is immersed in the narrative, the authorial audience has a richer consciousness: “the authorial audience has the double consciousness of the mimetic and the synthetic, while the narrative audience has a single consciousness.”²³⁶ In every reading there is a continuous and changing interaction between the three components, generating a dynamic and a tension that are seen as the essence of reading.

While narratives are studied as a continuous exchange between sender, text, and receiver, dynamics are at the heart of all rhetorical readings. Unreliable narration, for instance, is not reduced to one final source (the implied author) but studied as a continually changing interaction between the three “primary tasks” of narrators: “they report (along the axis of facts, characters, and events), interpret (along the axis of knowledge or perception), and evaluate (along the axis of ethics).”²³⁷ The authorial audience evaluates these activities and tries to find out whether the narrator is concealing information (underreporting) or distorting it (misreporting). This leads to six types of unreliability: underreporting, underinterpreting, underevaluating, misre-

Dynamics

porting, misinterpreting, and misevaluating. Narrators may combine these types or shift from one category to another. It is up to the reader to keep track of these dynamics and this polyphony.²³⁸

Following M. M. Bakhtin, Phelan does not consider a narrative text as a single-voice monologue that supposedly addresses the reader in a compelling manner but rather as an exchange of voices in which the reader has an active role in weighing one voice against another.²³⁹ When reading a story, a reader hears the voices of all kinds of narrative agents—both inside and outside the story—and tries to distill from this polyphony one harmonious whole. This is precisely the way in which the reader gets actively involved in the story. This involvement links “the logic of the text’s movement from beginning to middle through ending (what we call textual dynamics) and the audience’s temporal experience (readerly dynamics) of that movement.”²⁴⁰ If these two dynamics run parallel, they lead to (or at least give a good sense of) the authorial intention.

It is not just the level of narrating and telling that leads to a dynamic reading experience; the level of the told (i.e., the sequence of events) is witness to the same kind of interaction between “textual and readerly dynamics.”²⁴¹ In rhetorical narratology the plot is no longer reduced to a structuralist scheme of possibilities; it resides in the interplay between textual and readerly dynamics, which point to the authorial project. A plot “typically proceeds through the introduction, complication, and resolution (in whole or in part) of unstable situations within, between, or among the characters. These dynamics of instability may be accompanied by a dynamics of tension in the telling—unstable relations among authors, narrators, and audiences—and the interaction of the two sets of dynamics, as in narratives that employ unreliable narration, may have significant consequences for our understanding of the ‘something that happened.’”²⁴²

*Synthetic
and dynamic
reading of Krol*

Since the story of “The Map” begins in a bookshop that offers the public exactly what it expects and wants, one may take this setting as an (authorial) indication of the synthetic and metafictional nature of the story. The scene in the shop seems to suggest a general view on fiction as a means for entertainment, tailored to suit the expectations and tastes of the readers. Literature is part of a provincial kind of coziness and contentment. In the second part of the story, where the seeming-

ly omniscient and impersonal narrator turns out to be homodiegetic, this general idea is particularized via the main character's desire to have his small-town reality mapped, that is, "translated" into the map he bought at the bookshop. This desire seems to tie in with the mimetic attitude. But there is more to it. The relation between the map and reality works both ways: it is not only exciting to see the real world mapped, it is equally thrilling to visit the parts that are on the map and that the narrator has never seen before. The map is not just a representation of reality; reality must adapt itself to the map. This two-sided form of dynamics can be read as a (synthetic) indication of the interchange between the textual dynamics (mapping the world) and the readerly dynamics (the reader "performing" the script or following the route laid out by the text).

However, when the narrator begins to realize that a complete overlap between map and route (or text and reality) is not possible, he loses interest. This may suggest that mimetic readings sooner or later meet their limits and that it is necessary to move beyond mimetic desires. The story then is not just about living and growing up in a provincial town; it is about becoming a writer by moving beyond the diverting and mimetic functions of texts. It speaks about the nature and function of fiction, as well as about its relation to reality. The tensions and interactions between map and route, text and reality, can also be seen at the level of narration, where the seemingly omniscient narrator whose mapping of a world is to be accepted as a reality makes room for an I-narrator who is not omniscient and who does not succeed in reconciling map and route, text and reality. If the first paragraph gives the safe and comfortable impression of a realistic story about small-town life, the shift in the second paragraph leads to an uneasy feeling that the narrator is not in control of his story and that his fictional world fails to overlap with the real one.

The issue of fictionality has gained prominence in recent rhetorical narratology, which rejects classical, intratextual approaches to fiction. In *The Distinction of Fiction* (1999), Dorrit Cohn tried to pinpoint the uniqueness of fiction by means of textual features. In the seventh chapter, "Signposts of Fictionality," she offered three narratological features to distinguish fictional from nonfictional texts. First, fictional narratives contain two levels of analysis, story and discourse,

*Fictionality
and rhetoric*

whereas nonfictional texts (such as a historical study) feature a referential level. Second, only fiction offers complete access to the minds of others. There can be no omniscience outside fiction, meaning “that the imaginary figures can be known in ways that those of real persons can not.”²⁴³ Finally, there is “the duplicate vocal origin of fiction.”²⁴⁴ It refers to the author/narrator distinction not found outside fiction.

There have been many other attempts to find “signposts” of fictionality.²⁴⁵ Cohn herself referred to Käte Hamburger’s *The Logic of Literature*. Hamburger claimed that “epic fiction is the sole epistemological instance where the I-originary (or subjectivity) of a third person qua third person can be portrayed.”²⁴⁶ Seeing a third person as if it were a first person amounts to the second distinction of fiction Cohn mentioned. Free indirect speech is an exemplary technique for merging the voices of the third and first person, and as such it is typical of fictional texts.²⁴⁷ Other linguistic and technical devices have been proposed as signposts of fictionality, for instance by Jean-Marie Schaeffer, who pointed to certain types of verbs, deictics, and dialogues.²⁴⁸

Numerous objections have been formulated against these intratextual approaches. None of the so-called “signposts” are exclusive to fiction, and fictional texts often use devices that are supposed to be signposts of nonfiction, such as controllable references to the real world. Boundaries between fiction and nonfiction seem to be porous and unstable; instead of talking about a dualism, it seems better to speak of a continuum with varying degrees of fictionality. To come to terms with these and similar problems, rhetorical and pragmatic approaches do not regard fictionality as a distinctive textual feature of fiction-as-a-genre but as a communicative and discursive strategy. In *The Rhetoric of Fictionality* (2007), Richard Walsh claims that fictionality “functions within a communicative framework: it resides in a way of using a language, and its distinctiveness consists in the recognizably distinct rhetorical set invoked by that use.”²⁴⁹

The distinctive set is no longer a collection of textual traits. It is part of a strategy the reader uses to make sense of the communication in which he or she is engaged. Relevance, rather than truth or referentiality, is the decisive factor here: if it is relevant to read the text, or parts of it, as fiction, the reader will do so. In that way he or she will make the most of the message and will get close to the intentions of its send-

er, or so the reader imagines. The three parties typical of the rhetorical approach (sender, message, receiver) are united by the assumption of relevance in communication: "Fictionality is neither a boundary between worlds,²⁵⁰ nor a frame dissociating the author from the discourse, but a contextual assumption by the reader, prompted by the manifest information that the authorial discourse is offered as fiction. This contextual assumption is a preliminary move in the reader's effort to maximize relevance."²⁵¹

As a consequence, fictionality is not confined to the realm or genre of fiction. Nor does it coincide with narrative. There are fictional and nonfictional narratives, and fiction can be used in non-narrative environments, such as poetry. More generally, fiction is a mode that can be used, both by the sender and the receiver, in serious, truthful, and referential forms of communication to maximize relevance. In their path-breaking essay "Ten Theses about Fictionality," Henrik Skov Nielsen, James Phelan, and Richard Walsh point to the ubiquity of fictionality "in politics, business, medicine, sports, and throughout the disciplines of the academy." It is "a specific communicative strategy" and an important "vehicle for negotiating values, weighing options, and informing beliefs and opinions," but it can function only if a tacit understanding is shared by sender and receiver. The speaker and the audience must "share an understanding of the distinction between fictionality and nonfictionality."²⁵²

All rhetorical narratologists agree that fictionality is used and should be studied in the interplay between sender, text, and receiver, but different theorists may emphasize different parties in that interplay. To Phelan, the decisive role in this process of understanding and negotiation seems to go to the sender and his or her intention. For him, fictionality refers "to any rhetorical act in which somebody on some occasion intentionally signals his or her use of a discursive invention to someone else for some purpose(s)." He adds that "the definition: *someone intentionally signaling* distinguishes fictionality from lying, on the one hand, and from unintended inventions such as dreams on the other."²⁵³ So, the distinction of fiction seems to be primarily an intentional and communicational matter.

To Walsh, the reader, though by no means free, seems to be decisive, not only because he defines fictionality as "a contextual assumption

by the reader,”²⁵⁴ or because he recognizes that communicational intentions are inferred,²⁵⁵ but especially because he goes to great lengths to show that the sender is never in complete control of the communication. Walsh explicitly states, “I would reject the conclusion that the rhetoric of fictionality must therefore be wholly accounted to authorial intention, not least because any such model of novelistic communication is necessarily abstracted from the particularity of the narrative, which would therefore be underdetermined.”²⁵⁶ Stefan Iversen and Henrik Skov Nielsen focus on the self-conscious dimension of the message as the crucial feature of fictionality, stating that “fictionality is present whenever the invented nature of a communication is signaled.”²⁵⁷ Obviously that does not rule out authorial intention or readerly inference;²⁵⁸ it is merely a matter of emphasis. Whether the stress is on the sender, the receiver, or the message is not a fundamental or a divisive issue, because the communicative outlook remains the same in the works of Phelan, Walsh, Nielsen, and Iversen. Furthermore, they all agree that fiction is not an autonomous world or a self-contained genre but that it is geared toward reality. This “double exposure of imagined and real” recurs in another important communicative kind of narratology, inspired by cognitive studies.²⁵⁹

2.2. Cognitive Narratology

*Reader and
structuralism*

A narratological interpretation differs from reader to reader, and the most progressive type of narratology is the one that takes into account the interpretive variants in the theory formation. In structuralist narratology the reader was officially excluded, but whenever the abstract categories and types were actually applied, their effect on the reader was implicitly referred to. Delay and acceleration, omniscience and reliability, can be grasped only as effects on the reader. This is no coincidence: the structuralists may have isolated the text, but they still worked with the well-known communication triad of sender, message, and receiver, in which the audience obviously plays a central role.

*Reader and
reception theory*

From the end of the 1960s onward, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss started to develop, respectively, *reception aesthetics* and *reception history*—two theories that for the first time included the reader in literary criticism in a systematic way.²⁶⁰ Jauss wanted to rewrite literary history by considering it as a sequence of ways in which a literary text

confirms and breaks with patterns of expectation. Iser, on the other hand, wanted to design a theory describing the effect of the literary text in general. He started from the assumption that the text pushes the reader in the direction of a certain interpretation. In analogy to Booth's implied author, Iser opted for the somewhat misleading term "implied reader" for the text-driven role of the reader. According to Iser, the turning points in the development of this role are the "gaps" that result from the fact that the text can never fully meet the expectations that readers cherish based on their experience of reality.²⁶¹ Gaps arise not only from the imperfect overlap with reality as it is experienced but also from the structure of the text. They can, for instance, result from abrupt transitions in the story or sudden changes in narration or focalization.

Iser's theory is discussed in the last chapter of Rimmon-Kenan's survey *Narrative Fiction* for a particular reason. She realized all too well that narratology had to take the reader into account more systematically, and at the time she was writing her textbook, Iser's work provided a natural supplement in this respect. Rimmon-Kenan also paid attention to other reader-oriented approaches such as psychology and semiotics.²⁶² In the afterword she added in 2002 to her now classic book, she emphasizes the importance of these approaches even more. She appreciates the expansion brought about by postclassical narratology, which no longer limits analysis to literature itself but also pays attention to the context. According to her, this expansion is largely due to various reader-oriented approaches.²⁶³

Ever since reception aesthetics, the reader has been integrated into narratology in many different ways, especially in the context of the cognitive paradigm, which has acquired an important position in the human sciences and which stresses the processing of information.²⁶⁴ The terms "cognitive" and "information" may create the impression that elements of affect do not play a significant role in this approach, but this is not necessarily the case. Psychologists such as Richard Gerrig and Victor Nell study the emotional identification and far-reaching immersion that give readers the impression they are being carried away by the text.²⁶⁵ In their empirical tests researchers working within this paradigm mostly limit themselves to the concrete interpretations of (parts of) texts.

*Reader and
cognitive
paradigm*

In a very extensive account of research on language processing and narrative comprehension, Sanford and Emmott aim to integrate contributions to these topics in neuroscience, psychology, and psycholinguistics with work done in the humanities. They propose a “rhetorical processing framework” with three strands. “Fundamental scenario-mapping theory” develops the basic assumption that “much understanding is accomplished by relating what is being said to background knowledge,”²⁶⁶ or, as they also call it, “everyday world knowledge.”²⁶⁷ The “rhetorical focusing principle” considers the ways in which the reader’s attention is manipulated by the author, and as such it amounts to a “psychological version of the humanities ideas of foregrounding and defamiliarization.”²⁶⁸ The third strand of the processing framework deals with effects of reading (such as immersion in the story-world) as they are approached empirically in studies of embodiment in psychology.

Even within the discipline of narratology, some cognitive approaches come very close to cognitive psychology and adopt some of its positivistic presuppositions. Peter Dixon and Marisa Bortolussi start from a rigid distinction between, on the one hand, so-called objective characteristics in the text and, on the other hand, subjective effects of those characteristics on the reader.²⁶⁹ As we will also see in our discussions of narrative ethics and postmodern narratology, most postclassical approaches reject this traditional and dualistic view of the objective text and the subjective reader. So-called objective characteristics are construed by the reader as well. The exact points of contact and the differences between text and reader can probably not be determined in any straightforward way. For those approaches, a rigid distinction between object and subject is certainly no solution.

Since this handbook is geared to the relevance of narrative theory for the interpretation of literary texts, our presentation of cognitive narratology will be narrowed down to a discussion of how, as David Herman puts it, “stories across media interlock with interpreters’ mental states and processes, thus giving rise to narrative experiences.”²⁷⁰ This question “bears on stories viewed as a target of interpretation; it concerns ways in which interpreters use various kinds of semiotic affordances to engage with narrative worlds.”²⁷¹ In this section, therefore, we engage with borrowings from the cognitive scienc-

es by narratologists in order to see how they can enhance the meanings of our three central stories. This means, for instance, that when we discuss how readers construct characters, we will zoom in on the contributions by Ralf Schneider,²⁷² since they go beyond an abstract model of this process so as to describe exactly how the construction comes about.²⁷³ With reference to the reader's engagement with a narrative and the emotions that can produce, we will draw special attention to the work of María-Ángeles Martínez, whose notion of "story-world possible selves" also allows for practicable analysis.²⁷⁴

A cognitive approach that has proven useful for literary theory is *frame theory*. This approach was developed by, among others, Marvin Minsky in the study of artificial intelligence.²⁷⁵ It assumes that people, when confronted with a new situation, will select a structure from memory to help them to deal with this new situation. For Minsky this frame consists of a network of nodes and relations that can be applied quite easily to the new situation. The theory also allows for some flexibility in this application: on the one hand the network consists of representations that are perfectly valid for the situation; on the other hand, it also contains a number of slots to be filled with specific details that are valid only for the situation at hand and thereby augment the frame's relevance for that situation. These details can be worked out to fit the new situation in a concrete way. When in a foreign country one notices a sign on the edge of the road, its location, shape, size, and the material it is made of will immediately trigger the insight that this might be a traffic sign. For the precise meaning of the sign, the icon and text on the sign will be as important as the concrete environment.

Frame theory

Manfred Jahn defines a frame as "the cognitive model that is selected and used (and sometimes discarded) in the process of reading a narrative."²⁷⁶ Both Jahn and Ansgar Nünning have applied frame theory to narratology.²⁷⁷ As we mentioned in the discussion of the structuralist characteristics of narration, Nünning argues that the unreliable narrator is often a psychological projection of the reader who aims to clarify ambiguities or contradictions in the narrator's utterances. This argument, however, does not capture all meanings of the concept. It is necessary to anticipate a whole gamut of reader reactions. In any case, textual features are not sufficient to argue against the trustworthiness

*Frame and
the unreliable
narrator*

of a narrator. One always has to investigate the framework leading to the observation that the narrator is lying or is morally unstable.

Narratology traditionally reserves the term “lie” for a lack of correspondence between a narrator’s utterance and a situation that occurs in another part of the text. If the reader accepts the situation as an actual one, the utterance is called unreliable. At first glance, this is an intersubjectively valid method for distinguishing truth from falsity, and yet even this method must take into account cultural and epistemological nuance. What about “white” lies and formulations that can be interpreted in different ways? Judgments concerning moral instability imply a general norm that, at least in our society, can hardly be defined. Every interpretation of a narrator’s unreliability has to be linked to the specific norm one uses as a reader.

*Krol and the
unreliable
narrator*

The first-person narrator in Gerrit Krol’s story misrepresents the period before he acquires the map because of the influence the map has had on him. He was liberated by it, and therefore he is no longer capable of representing the time before the liberation in any objective way. In other words, the first-person narrator in “The Map” is not entirely reliable when he is talking about his youth. He does not lie, but his selection of data gives rise to a biased image. In the construction of that image the reader plays a role as well. He or she may interpret the first paragraph ideologically as the description of an unfree world dominated by the Christian worldview. Sunday is the day of the Lord, and people are supposed to rest. This frustrates a number of desires related to consumption, which nicely illustrates the hold of Christian ideology on society. If no connection is made between the shaded shop windows and Christian morality, the entire first paragraph is much less likely to be interpreted ideologically. As a result, the paragraph will appear less of a distortion originating from the narrator’s evolution, an evolution that may be described as a distancing from or even a rejection of the original ideology. Perhaps these descriptions are in fact too strong, and in any case they make sense only within the ideological cognitive frame some readers use.

*Frame and the
third-person
narrator*

Manfred Jahn uses frame theory for the analysis of third-person narrative situations. Following Mieke Bal, he reduces narrative texts to the formula “X tells R that Y sees that Z does something.”²⁷⁸ According to Jahn, this formula is the most complete description of the model a

reader can use to process a third-person narrative text. There are three typical models, the so-called defaults. First, there are texts for which the entire formula holds. Second, there are texts without an internal focalizer.²⁷⁹ These texts correspond to the formula “X tells R that Z does something.” And third, there are texts with a nearly invisible narrator: “(X tells R that) Y sees that Z does something.” Every model comes with its own expectations. A visible narrator who does not participate in the story is believed to be omnipresent, omniscient, and reliable. From an internal focalizer we expect an especially subjective presentation of the events that could, as it were, be seen to originate in the focalizer’s mind.

As we have indicated in our brief presentation of the theory, the concept of frame is flexible enough to adapt defaults to texts that do not immediately conform to the typical expectations. In the course of reading, the selected frame is developed further and refined at the level of the details that have to be filled out.²⁸⁰ If the text completely clashes with one’s basic expectations—for instance, when a first-person narrator disrupts the third-person model—the initial frame is dropped. The choice for a new frame depends not only on the solution it can offer to the reading problem but also on the extent to which it provides a better interpretation of the text read so far.

Jahn argues, however, that some narratological terms and concepts have to be made more flexible if they are to be used as efficiently as possible in the processing of narrative texts. A sentence such as “The room was dark” may lead to the application of the well-known frame “description,” a mode of narration Seymour Chatman describes as stopping the narrative clock so as to let the narrator present the environment.²⁸¹ However, this frame is too narrow for this sentence, since it may also be the result of an internal focalizer’s observation. In that circumstance, time does not stop at all: the character’s observation implies a certain duration.

Another concept that, according to Jahn, has to be made more flexible is that of free indirect speech. His frame version of free indirect speech emphasizes the context in which this form of representation occurs. A sentence recognized as free indirect speech (frame A) can be part of a character’s observation (frame B), and frame A as well as frame B may fit into a quotation of the character’s thoughts by the nar-

*Frame and free
indirect speech*

rator or into a summary of those thoughts also provided by the narrator. An example from *Madame Bovary*: “Would she never escape? She was every bit as good as all the women who lived happy lives.”²⁸² Frame A consists of the sentence “Would she never escape?”; frame B is Emma Bovary’s observation (she asks herself this question); the narrator quotes her thoughts. In the second sentence (“She was every bit as good as all the women who lived happy lives”), it is very well possible that the narrator is summarizing her thought.

In order for a sentence to be recognized as free indirect speech, Jahn develops a general description listing three characteristics. First, a sentence that can be read as free indirect speech is a nonsubordinated construction: it is not a subclause introduced by “that” but an independent main clause. Second, tense and person are adapted to the existing narrative situation. “Would he see her tomorrow?” is the free indirect version of “He wondered, ‘Will I see her tomorrow?’” in which the first person shifts to a third person and the future tense changes to the conditional mood. Third, the sentence represents thoughts, utterances, and writings of a character. Because of this general description, the literary standard model of free indirect speech (third person, past tense) loses its focal status in narratology. Nevertheless, Jahn does not go as far as Fludernik, who as we mentioned at the end of chapter 2 thinks that free indirect speech should be studied as a form of typification.²⁸³

*Frame, free
indirect speech,
and Mutsaers*

“Pegasian” is a third-person narrative with a reclusive, invisible narrator, which makes the reader’s task slightly more difficult. The riding school itself does not become the subject of a description and neither does the appearance of the riding master and the girl. Only the girl’s denim apparel is mentioned. This scanty information slightly frustrates the reader’s elementary expectations. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the story is told by a traditional narrator, which means that this is an example of the first formula, and as such it answers to the most complete formulation of the framework: X tells R that Y sees that Z does something. Once this is accepted, the narrator’s invisibility and parsimony can be seen as an indication of the distance maintained with regard to the characters. The invisible narrator presents the conversation between the riding master and the girl in a mostly indirect way, avoiding a simple dialogue, perhaps to add an ironic note to the whole event. This irony may lend the girl’s opinions a pa-

thetic overtone that is further intensified by the triviality of the topic: a pair of riding breeches.

Moreover, the indirect presentation in this text allows for a mixture of utterances and thoughts that undermines the riding master's authority. It is not always clear whether the riding master has actually voiced a certain thought, but the accumulation of nagging opinions demonstrates the extent to which the narrator has a hold on the character and is able to humiliate him (or her). A flexible and contextual understanding of free indirect speech, as Jahn proposes it, attaches more importance to the function of this mode of presentation than to its grammatical properties. It clarifies the uses of free indirect speech and demonstrates how it ties in with the meaning of the story and the central theme of authority.

Not only does free indirect speech generate the detached depiction of the riding master, but the girl too is represented rather ironically in the first part of the story, especially when her behavior is considered to be a teenage whim. In the last paragraph, however, free indirect speech causes empathy rather than irony. The narrator recedes in favor of the character, which makes it slightly harder to use the third-person frame. The girl's eventual insight is honored with a positive thought ("As long as you take off") in which the narrator and the girl seem to come to an agreement.

In this interpretation the reader encounters two versions of free indirect speech in "Pegasian": an ironic version and an empathic version. It is not necessary to drop one in favor of the other. The specific succession of distance and empathy nicely ties in with the girl's development in relation to the riding master: at first, she completely disagrees with the instructor's views, but this changes later. Since free indirect speech follows the girl's development, the narrator—who is responsible for the choice of speech—could be said to be more sympathetic to the girl, in spite of relative detachment in the first part. The narrator's ironic treatment of the riding master might suggest a shared negative attitude toward that authority figure.

David Herman published a significant share of his cognitive contributions to narratology in the flagship American journal *PMLA*, which underscores the prestige of this approach.²⁸⁴ Herman wants to know how to define a narrative text. He uses the term *script*, which, like

Script

frame, derives from artificial intelligence. A script is an expectation concerning the specific sequence of a series of events.²⁸⁵ Both in the case of frame and script, readers draw on their memory to interpret the reading experience by means of structures acquired earlier. However, contrary to frame, which is a static structure, script emphasizes development. This makes it more suitable as a theoretical tool for the interpretation of a narrative text, which is always dynamic.

Script and story

According to David Herman's general hypothesis, a story, much like a greeting or a quarrel, is a way of joining existing knowledge to new data. This can work only if we really possess the existing knowledge in question. What knowledge leads a reader to view a text as a narrative text? Herman starts from the structuralist suggestions concerning the minimal story as a temporal and causal sequence of events. He goes on to claim there are many textual characteristics that contribute to the reception of a text as a story—such as the indication of new information in a recognizable context and the suggestion of an action structure. Nevertheless, a text really becomes a story only when the reader sees a connection between the text and an existing script. The sentences "Mary was invited to Jack's party. She wondered if he would like a kite" can easily be taken as a story or as part of a story because we all know how birthday parties are organized and prepared.²⁸⁶ In this example the preparation is crucial.

*Activation
of scripts*

A specific sequence of sentences seems to constrain the number and type of activated scripts, but it is hard to deduce the exact nature of this constraint from the characteristics of the sentences themselves. In another context and for other readers the sentences about the party can be part of a story about a retirement party for a colleague who uses kites to study the weather. This context can be imagined on the basis of the text, but the full range of potential scripts can never be exhausted. It does seem feasible to say of a certain sequence of sentences that they resemble a story more than another sequence might. Herman therefore defines a text's narrativity as the extent to which this text activates scripts urging the reader to consider the text to be a story.²⁸⁷ According to him, the degree of activation is higher when the activated knowledge is more complex and comprehensive. The more scripts a text activates and the more refined these scripts are, the faster the text will be considered a story.

Herman links the activation of scripts to a hypothesis about literary history. He argues that narrative innovation often implies the explicit rejection of old scripts, which forces the reader to use another kind of world knowledge in the interpretation of a text with a seemingly familiar subject. The subject is familiar, but the scripts that are normally used to interpret it do not seem to function anymore. At the beginning of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes makes the reader give up his or her idealized knowledge of the development of a quest in favor of what Herman describes as “scripts grounded in an awareness of human potential and limitations.”²⁸⁸

According to Herman, the diachronic study of reader activation has to be linked to a synchronic analysis of the various ways in which different genres deal with scripts in the same period. He gives three examples from the 1920s and 1930s: children’s literature, autobiography, and the experimental novel. In that period children’s literature also sought to activate morally virtuous scripts such as the postponement of satisfaction. Of course this presupposes a target audience that recognizes these scripts. In this context, activation implies the consolidation of existing scripts or perhaps the production of larger action structures by the combination of scripts with which young readers are already familiar.

Script and genre

A passage from the autobiography of Maud Gonne, an Irish nationalist, demonstrates that this genre places much higher demands on the reader, especially when it comes to scripts about identity and self. Gonne activates but also undermines the scripts in which heroism is related to masculinity, which forces the reader to revise his or her preconceived ideas about female development. Herman takes his last example from *Nightwood*, an experimental novel by Djuna Barnes. She confronts the reader with a great variety of activated scripts and reduces the action structures to a few movements, so that the application of familiar action sequences becomes very difficult. This forces readers—even more so than in the case of Gonne—to call their own scripts into question and to make adjustments.

Herman avoids exaggerated statements on the differences between the genres to which his examples belong, and quite rightly so. A novel does not need to be more demanding than an autobiography, and authors of children’s literature may be less than serious with respect

to their didactic assignment. Nevertheless, this synchronic approach provides more insight into the position of a narrative text within the genre system. The combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches enables postclassical narratology to contribute to literary history.

*Scripts and
Mutsaers*

Which scripts do Mutsaers and Krol activate and how do they use them? “Pegasian” immediately invokes our expectations about a conversation. Conversations can develop in many directions, but in this case the possibilities are limited by the fact that one of the participants seems to be in a position of power. All of us have at one time been addressed by an insistent and authoritarian figure, and thus we are familiar with this kind of conversation. Our knowledge about its ending will partly depend on our own experiences—those who have suffered because of powerful people may find it hard to imagine a good result. This could mean that important aspects of the text are neglected to the benefit of personal projection. Nevertheless, a lot of narrative prose possesses a power of activation that runs at least partly counter to this projection. This is also the case in “Pegasian.” The girl’s first utterance already indicates that she will put up some resistance, and so we immediately have to integrate this element into our expectations. How do conversations between an authoritarian figure and an assertive younger person develop? It is unlikely that the person in power will simply back down, but it is clearly possible that he (or she) might have recourse to instruments other than verbal ones. Younger persons may give in after a while, but their resistance may also continue, especially if an authoritarian figure’s irritation shows through and if younger persons facing such figures notice that, in spite of their subordinate position, they have achieved some results.

The first part of “Pegasian” largely conforms to the conventional development of an argument between an authority figure and a pupil. The text’s first sentences call for such a script. The riding master slowly loses patience with the girl but eventually vents the accumulated frustration on the horses instead of the girl: “These horses are moving around like turtles. Time to bring out the whip.” The pupil, on the contrary, enjoys resisting the riding master and stands her ground. With respect to script theory, it is interesting that the text strongly downplays the argument script in the second part. In order to understand the girl’s eventual insight, the reader can turn to scripts on adolescent behav-

ior, some more condescending than others. Perhaps the riding master has convinced the girl after all, and perhaps her resistance was simply due to the idea that this is the way one reacts when one is young. Or perhaps her eventual insight suggests that it would have been better not to put up any resistance at all instead of making a scene like a typical teenager. These interpretations obviously depend on the reader's conception of an adolescent.

The argument part of the script is activated by the conversation, the reconciliatory part by the story's ending. Of course the text's formal aspects influence the application of the activated scripts. Multiple focalization and a reclusive narrator make it hard to interpret the word "finally" in the second part: "Finally, she understands." If "finally" expresses the narrator's evaluation, the latter seems to share the disdain that is part of the condescending script about willful teenage behavior. If the word must be assigned to the girl, this triggers the slightly disarming suggestion that she was willing to understand the usefulness of the riding breeches but that she simply was not convinced.

The first paragraph of "The Map" describes Mr. and Mrs. Paalman's bookstore in the village of Dorkwerd. A spatial description may trigger expectations as to the events to come in the environment at hand. In Krol's story the bookstore, as an example of the blinding effects of Christianity, can be used as the starting point for a number of different scripts. Perhaps the main character will try to steal books in the shop. Perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Paalman will have an adventure inspired by their contact with books. Perhaps the world of books will liberate the couple's imagination, which might lead to a clash with their environment. On the basis of the sentence "he's nice, she's wearing the pants," the reader may suspect that the bookstore will be the scene of a battle between the sexes.

Scripts and Krol

The fact that so many scripts are imaginable indicates that the text has a high degree of narrativity. Aspects of these scripts can be integrated with the scripts evoked by the second paragraph. At the beginning of this paragraph, the first-person narrator introduces himself and emphasizes the importance of the shop window being shaded. He sees the map when he is not supposed to see it, which gives the object an extraordinary value. Will there be a confrontation between the first-person narrator and the ideology symbolized by the shutters? Will the

map show him the way out of the community dominated by Christian prohibitions? The adventure suggested by these scripts is limited, however, to trips to places that are on the map but that had not been visited by the main character before. Liberation will not come as fast as might have been expected, because the experiencing I keeps returning home during his map period. The end of his narration reinforces this qualification since the first-person narrator tells us the map had become superfluous and that he therefore did not keep it.

The liberation script, which was evoked by, among other things, the windows being shaded on Sunday, vanishes along with the map. The undermining of this script leads the reader to reinterpret the first-person narrator's entire development along the lines of a much less adventurous script. This disappointing development is also a script that appears to be inherent in growing up. The child cherishes dreams and imagines scripts that can in fact be realized only to a very limited degree. Krol's choice of a first-person narrator intensifies the reader's identification with the boy, which frustrates the reader's expectations even more. This disillusionment can contribute to the insight that the reconstruction of the past is distorted by relativization and disappointment.

*Readers
construct
characters
(Schneider)*

Ralf Schneider has sought to theorize "the reader's construction of a mental model in the process of understanding character."²⁸⁹ In narrative processing, readers integrate information about characters from the text (bottom-up) and information from memory storages, including frames and scripts (top-down). The result is a mental model that is "continually updated, modified or revised to adapt to ongoing information processing."²⁹⁰ Schneider submits that there are essentially two kinds of models the reader can construct, depending on the quality and the quantity of information from the two sources. Readers may either land on a character "category" (which happens most often top-down, though narrative texts themselves can of course make explicit suggestions in this regard), or they resort to "personalization" (which happens most often bottom-up, although this might be enhanced by the top-down expectation that literary texts present to individuals—an expectation that defies categorization).

Categories can be social (e.g., the teacher, the lawyer), literary (e.g., the young man or woman in the course of his or her education), or, as just mentioned, the result of certain generalizing formulations in the

text. In the case of categorization, further information about the character can reinforce the category, but it can also be seen to work against it. If the category and the new information do not match, this can lead to “de-categorization” and ultimately to personalization. Other text-bound causes of personalization include, first and foremost, indirect self-characterization through the presentation of mental activity on the part of the character. The method of choice in this regard is internal focalization, which “seems rather to be the technique that best meets the reader’s personalization impulse.”²⁹¹

If in categorization there is still a partial match between the category first established and the new character information, the eventual result will not be personalization but rather “individuation,” in which the character becomes more than the mere representative of a particular group. According to Schneider, “individuation seems to be the norm rather than the exception. What is important in an individuated character model is that the original category membership is not given up.”²⁹² As we see it, individuation suggests that character constructions by the reader always have an element of degree to them. Individuation indicates a degree of personalization, whereas personalization can accommodate a degree of categorization, for instance when “original category membership [. . .] can be accepted as one element of a complex personality.”²⁹³

Schneider builds his character construction models on verbal clues, but we can extend his proposal to nonverbal media. For those readers who haven’t read any other work by Wasco and are therefore unfamiliar with them, the two characters in the title panel of “City” must look a bit weird. The one on the right is ostensibly a quadruped, which many readers may want to process as a dog, even though the creature’s “ears” are definitely unusual. The character on the left will be recognized as a humanoid figure, but there is an oddness about him or her that matches that of the dog. These relatively vague impressions may lead to a category attribution once the reader takes in panel one, in which a spaceship carrying the two protagonists lands in the city. The weirdness and the futuristic vehicle may add up to the literary category “alien,” which immediately evokes a science fiction scenario through which new information about the characters will be measured and categorized. This poses at least one big problem for the reader of “City.”

*Character
construction
in “City”*

Aliens usually have bad intentions when they come to earth, but the central characters do not betray any at all, to the point that the original categorization may no longer satisfy the reader. The two protagonists are definitely interested in the city—they take a look around, admire art, and visit many special locations. As a result, the social category of “the tourist” (on a brief vacation trip to the city) may gradually replace that of the alien or at least vie with it in terms of importance. If these two categorizations come about and persist until the end (at which time the two characters leave in their spaceship), their combination in “City” may lead to an interpretation of this graphic narrative as a metafictional story that lets its readers reflect on how we construct the identity of others.

The original weirdness of the characters, however, will probably also lead to a constant de-categorization. Their appearance is so quaint that readers may well give this individual trait priority over the categories that can be brought into play. If readers become aware of this prioritization, it may reinforce the metafictional interpretation as yet another element of how we construct people in real life. If the prioritization does not register with readers, then the quaintness of the two characters will at least result in a form of individuation that nicely accompanies them as they go about their business. On the other hand, if readers are so struck by the way the protagonists look that they understand the story more than anything else as a vehicle for the humanoid figure and the dog, the de-categorization will lead to a personalization on account of their uniqueness. Once readers are confronted with other graphic narratives featuring the two characters, this uniqueness will disappear and the two characters will be on the way to becoming a literary category in their own right.

*Readers construct
minds (Palmer)*

As a cognitive narratologist, Alan Palmer is convinced that narrative theorists can better grasp the construction of fictional minds by letting themselves be informed by work on real minds (by psychologists, philosophers, and cognitive scientists) than by focusing on the specifics of fiction as a semiotic object. While Schneider still does the latter in the sense that he ties his model to the sequence of actual references to a character, Palmer suggests through his central notion of the “continuing consciousness frame” that the dynamic process of character construction, just like with real people who will remain present

to us through a limited number of meetings or comments, “continues in the spaces between the various mentions of the character.”²⁹⁴ A reader has “the ability to take a reference to a character in the text and attach to it a presumed consciousness that exists continuously within the storyworld. [. . .] The reader strategy is to join up the dots.”²⁹⁵ This is in fact the reader’s central job, since “readers enter storyworlds primarily by attempting to follow the workings of the fictional minds contained in them.”²⁹⁶ No wonder then that readers remember certain characters so well: they have worked long and hard to produce them, especially in cases where the references to their fictional minds are few and far between.

In an attempt to go beyond the “internalist perspective” of most narratological efforts to describe fictional minds in terms of “those aspects that are inner, introspective, private, solitary, individual, psychological, mysterious, and detached,” Palmer wants to develop the “externalist perspective” that is also available from the cognitive sciences and that emphasizes “those aspects that are outer, active, public, social, behavioural, evident, embodied, and engaged.”²⁹⁷ Palmer’s “social mind” is a container term for what comes into view as a result of using the externalist perspective. One of the revelations is the fact that literary evocations of consciousness often indulge in the use of dispositions (defined early on by the psychologist William James as “bundles of habits”).²⁹⁸ Palmer examines chapter 3 of *The Portrait of a Lady*, by Henry James, and presents a selection of no fewer than thirteen such instances, including “Mrs. Touchett’s behavior was, as usual, perfectly deliberate,” which is glossed as follows: “The phrase ‘as usual’ shows that her deliberate behaviour on this occasion arises from her disposition to behave in this way.”²⁹⁹ Palmer’s findings in the human sciences indicate that talking about a mind habitually means talking about dispositions, but he implies they are entirely absent from narratology precisely because it is concerned with the specifics of evoking the workings of an individual mind at a particular moment (as can be found in the prestigious work of authors such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf) rather than with taking the more long-term and socially oriented externalist view.

Social minds

No wonder that in his discussion of the social mind Palmer zooms in on “intermental thought,” or thinking that is “joint, group, shared,

or collective, as opposed to *intramental*, or individual or private thought.”³⁰⁰ In an analysis of George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* he argues that the provincial town of Middlemarch literally has a mind of its own. It comes through in the text right away, since the narrator’s initial descriptions of the individual minds of Dorothea Brooke, her sister Celia Brooke, and their uncle and guardian Mr. Brooke are focalized through it. The narrator will use the passive voice (e.g., “Dorothea was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever”) to indicate an opinion held by a large outside source (in this case the landed gentry that forms part of the provincial storyworld) or resort to presupposition (e.g., “And how should Dorothea not marry?—a girl so handsome and with such prospects?”) in order to make a generally held norm explicit. As Palmer goes on to show, the Middlemarch mind is not monolithic and it has various effects on people, but it still provides a set of judgments and presumptions that transcend the individual and are nevertheless essential for understanding how fictional minds in Eliot’s novel operate. Palmer generalizes as follows: “Fictional minds, like real minds, form part of extended cognitive networks. We will never understand how individual minds work if we cut them off from the larger, collective units to which they belong.”³⁰¹

*Social minds
and Krol*

In the first paragraph of “The Map” the narrator expresses the Christian mind of the village of Dorkwerd. Since he does not mention the name of the village in this paragraph, the reader might even get the impression that this social mind is functioning in a larger whole—an entire region in which Christianity may dominate the thinking. Note that Christianity is not the sole purveyor of thoughts; if the narrator says “Christian shops,” he implies there are others that do not have their shades drawn on Sundays. To convey the shared thinking that also seems to have contained him as a boy, the narrator combines the mention of a feast day without any further explanation (“Saint Nicholas,” December 6, an occasion for children to get as many presents as their parents can afford) with the presentation of how book acquisitions typically go in that time of year. Early on in the paragraph the narrator also provides an explanation for the drawn shades (“so that people would not be seduced on Sunday to return and buy something on Monday”), but the choice of the word “seduced” already seems to indicate that the older narrator has become aware of the motivations and decisions that drive life the village.

Indeed, considered through the lens of the social mind, the rest of “The Map” can be seen as a tale of liberation from the Christian mind. At first there is still a clear connection, not only because the boy spots the map in a Christian bookshop but also because he goes through a phase of enthusiasm for the village and its surroundings as they appear on the map. The fact that he wants to bike all the roads on it even suggests an identification with the village and its social mind. Eventually, however, contacts with the world beyond the village (for which a second, “blank” map has been drawn) lead to a loss of interest; the Christian mind no longer dominates the narrator, who may well have understood that its narrow-mindedness is no match for the wider world. The map of the village was small and inspiring, but the idea that the blank map could work to expand the project turns out to be wrong. Interestingly, the liberation starts because the Christian mind has failed to function for a moment; the boy spots the village map because the shades of the bookstores haven’t been drawn properly. If they had been drawn as they should have, the boy might not have seen the light.

According to Palmer, the construction of characters and their worlds can also be approached through the application of attribution theory as developed in psychology. The best-known contributions to this theory include the work of Fritz Heider and Harold Kelley—Heider distinguished between internal attribution (when someone assigns the cause of another person’s behavior to an internal characteristic such as a personality trait) and external attribution (such as when we explain our own behavior with reference to an external cause).³⁰² Kelley underwrote this distinction and proposed the “co-variation theory,” which holds that a person is capable of managing the information he or she has stored in such a way that a variety and combination of elements can be attributed to an observed effect and its causes.³⁰³ Attribution theory has become popular through the concept of “theory of mind,” which Palmer defines as “our awareness of the existence of other minds, our knowledge of how to interpret our own and other people’s thought processes, our ability to make sense of other people’s actions by understanding the reasons for those actions.”³⁰⁴

*Attribution
theory*

In verbal narratives, minds and action are often intertwined. Palmer refers to the regular impossibility of separating physical actions from

*The thought-
action
continuum*

the mental life behind them as the “thought-action continuum.”³⁰⁵ He explains that, compared to “X stood behind the curtain,” the sentence “X hid behind the curtain” adds motive and thus tells the reader something about X’s mind: “The word ‘stood’ is at the action-end of the continuum; ‘hid’ is nearer the thought-end.”³⁰⁶ The thought-action continuum is one of the clearest illustrations of Palmer’s overhaul of the study of consciousness evocation in literary narrative. Instead of focusing, as classical narratology did, on clearly demarcated passages such as interior monologue, he extends the mind into the storyworld at large and insists that the border between mind and world is porous. This turns him into a precursor of the so-called 4E approach to the fictional mind, which we will discuss shortly.

Theory of mind
(Zunshine)

Some texts seem to make it difficult for readers to use their capacity to “read” real people as part of the processing and interpreting of narrative. This can happen, for instance, when texts feature a host of characters with grotesque amounts of behavioral incongruity and thus undermine any kind of direct parallel. In what perhaps amounts to the most famous investigation of narrative through the prism of theory of mind, Lisa Zunshine submits that fiction “engages, teases, and pushes to its tentative limits our mind-reading capacity,” to the point of explaining why we read it, as the title of her book announces.³⁰⁷ Novels “test the functioning of our cognitive adaptations for mind-reading while keeping us pleasantly aware that the ‘test’ is proceeding quite smoothly.”³⁰⁸ However, depending on the strength and stamina of the reader, the complexity of the representation may of course sooner or later upset the balance between challenge and reward. Zunshine offers as an extra caveat that an awareness of the sophistication of the mind-reading we engage in when reading fiction may lead to doubts about the extent to which we know real people we thought we knew.

In a now classic analysis, Zunshine applies one aspect of theory of mind—our capacity to manage multiple levels of intentionality in a narrative—to the passage from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* in which the title character’s husband, Richard, and his friend Hugh help an aristocratic woman interested in politics, Lady Bruton, to compose a letter to the editor of *The Times*. By carefully tracing the details of the passage, Zunshine detects no less than six nested levels of intentionality, starting from the opinion of the makers of the pen (used by

Hugh to write the letter) that it will never wear out, all the way up to Woolf “*intending us to recognize* [by inserting a parenthetical observation, “so Richard Dalloway felt”] that Richard is *aware* that Hugh *wants* Lady Bruton and Richard to *think* that because the makers of the pen *believe* that it will never wear out, the editor of the *Times* will *respect* and publish the ideas recorded by this pen.”³⁰⁹ As Zunshine herself makes clear, such a dizzying breakdown of about ten lines in the novel may not represent an average reader’s processing of it, but it does demonstrate that literary fiction can have a lot in store for those who (most often unconsciously) turn to it to exercise their theory of mind. When informed by knowledge about the cultural context in which fiction is produced or processed, the theory of mind approach may also lead to interpretations that incorporate the natural tendencies of many if not most readers to consider, analyze, and judge characters as they do real people.

Since “Pegasian” largely consists of speech report, the reader will have to work quite hard if, as Zunshine suggests, the application of theory of mind is indeed a default inclination. A logical sequence of motivations will certainly help to follow the reported dialogue. Especially in case the reader does not immediately see the point of the real pair of riding breeches, the statement in the first sentence of the story can be seen as the result of a desire or a self-perceived obligation on the part of the riding master to establish authority over a student. The girl’s reaction will then be interpreted either as a relatively modest inquiry or as the expression of a conscious or instinctive wish on her part to thwart the authority the riding master is trying to impose. Is she perhaps one of those adolescents who take a certain amount of pleasure in automatically opposing the powers that be, including riding instructors?

Whether she initially inquires or opposes, it’s clear that the riding master becomes upset. The instructor’s snide remarks result in sarcasm on the part of the girl. This doesn’t have to mean that she wanted to give the riding master a hard time in the first place; she might have felt so aggrieved by the “little girls” statement that she turns obstinate in order to defend herself. What gives the instructor the right to this pompous attitude? The narrator then evokes the thoughts of the instructor, which suggest a didactic motivation for the apparent need to stay in charge. These attributions of motivation for the argu-

*Theory of mind
in Mutsaers*

ment between the girl and the riding master reinforce the sense of hostility expressed in the actual dialogue. It is all the more surprising, then, when the girl comes around in the final paragraph. This development could well challenge the theory of mind logic, since the outcome of the story seems to belie the interpretation of the exchange. Real people who are in a foul mood do not change their minds so quickly and radically as the girl. At this point there are at least three possibilities. One: the challenge is so strong that the theory of mind logic breaks down and the story suddenly turns into a tale about the eagerness to treat fictional characters as real people. Two: the fact that the amount of time between the confrontation and the girl's insight is left unspecified gives the theory of mind reader a chance to justify her conversion to real riding breeches. Three: the sudden turn at the end suggests that people can change their minds even without apparent reasons to do so.

*Empathy and
the reader*

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, affect and emotion have received ever more attention in cognitively inspired narrative studies. In 2007 Suzanne Keen published *Empathy and the Novel*, which she presented as a study participating “in the growing interdisciplinary field [of] cognitive approaches to literary study, but it emphasizes affect.”³¹⁰ In some ways it can be seen as the affective supplement to theory of mind. Empathy can be compared to the capacity of mind reading, as both are all about taking the perspective of the other and as both are claimed to be crucial reasons for reading fiction. However, empathy is perspective-taking on an emotional plane: “In empathy, sometimes described as an emotion in its own right, we feel what we believe to be the emotions of others.”³¹¹

Combining psychology with narrative theory, as well as using empirical data taken from her own experiments and from existing studies, Keen succeeds in relativizing stereotypes surrounding empathy, such as the idea that women are more prone to empathy than men or that novel reading turns the reader into a more social human being. She also distinguishes empathy neatly from “related moral affects such as sympathy, outrage, pity, righteous indignation, and (not to be underestimated) shared joy and satisfaction.”³¹² And she points to “empathetic narrative techniques,”³¹³ without losing sight of Meir Sternberg's Proteus principle: there is no simple causal link between a technique

(such as I-narration or internal focalization) and an increase or decrease in readerly empathy.

The most important narrative techniques that induce empathy are related to “character identification,” which concerns all aspects of characterization and therefore is to be found on the level of “narrative” (the second level of the structuralist three-tier system). A second important domain for promoting or hindering empathy is found in what Keen (following narratologists such as Stanzel and Cohn) calls “narrative situation (including point of view and perspective).”³¹⁴ This is related not just to the use of “I” and “we” versus “he/she” or “they” but also to the thematization of empathy and affiliated feelings, which may be presented as morally right and decent. Many novels and novelists “celebrate the value of narrative empathy.”³¹⁵

In addition, forms of empathy can be distinguished on the basis of the targeted audience. The first form is “bounded strategic empathy [that] occurs within an in-group, stemming from experiences of mutuality, and leading to feeling with familiar others.” One might say that novels making use of this type of empathy preach to the converted. Second, there is an “ambassadorial strategic empathy,” which is a bit broader than the first one, as it targets “chosen others with the aim of cultivating their empathy for the in-group, often to a specific end.” And finally there is the broadest possible form, termed “broadcast strategic empathy” and calling upon “every reader to feel with members of a group, by emphasizing our common vulnerabilities and hopes.”³¹⁶ Although Keen remains suspicious of far-reaching claims concerning the value of empathy, she demonstrates very convincingly that emotive responses are crucial for the understanding of both narrative and narration.

Since the 1990s several philosophers of mind have reformed what can be summarized as “traditional cognitivism.”³¹⁷ This is the idea that cognition is the manipulation of representations by a mind that processes and is supposedly discrete from these representations. In the new, post-Cartesian view, the emphasis is on the fact that the mind is embodied.³¹⁸ In other words, “some cognitive abilities depend upon features of human bodily experience” beyond the brain.³¹⁹ Thought is thus no longer abstract and computational but tied to, for instance, bodily resources. A popular example is that of the “outfielder prob-

4E cognition

lem” in baseball. How does an outfielder manage to get to the right place at the right time to catch the ball as it comes off the bat? In the old paradigm of cognition, the outfielder would combine a perception of the ball and its direction with a model of its motion, the player’s brain would use a representation based on the model to predict the landing location, and it would then move the body to where it needs to be for the catch. In the new paradigm the emphasis is on the outfielder’s bodily resources. There is debate about the exact explanation.³²⁰ However, an important aspect of the solution is that the outfielder’s eyes continuously track the ball as its visual velocity increases or decreases, which makes the player move backward or forward without any computation whatsoever.

The embodied mind is at the center of the new cognition paradigm.³²¹ Given the evident fact that the body is always situated in an environment, other concepts have intensified the recent developments in the philosophy of mind. On top of embodiment, so-called “4E cognition” includes “extended cognition” (which refers to the literal extension of some cognitive processes into elements of the physical world), “embedded cognition” (which involves the claim that “while cognitive processing may take place in the head, it often depends on interactions between the agent and his or her ecological setting”), and “enactive cognition” (which specifies that mainly sensorimotor skills contribute to these interactions).³²² The classic illustration of extended cognition, and one that largely fits the other concepts as well, involves two people who wanted to visit the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Inga remembered the address, but Otto, who has a memory deficiency, consulted a personal notebook in which he found the address. From the point of view of 4E cognition, the two address retrievals are alike, since mind is larger than brain processes and thus includes Otto’s notebook.³²³

*Second-
generation
cognitive
narratology*

As Daniel Hutto and Patrick McGivern suggest, “the various E-approaches are best understood as a family.”³²⁴ There are commonalities and divisions, including a variety of opinions about the degree to which the new paradigm undermines the old one. The most useful borrowings from the new paradigm for the study of narrative are characterized by an awareness of these nuances. In their introduction to a special journal issue on “second-generation cognitive science,”

Karin Kukkonen and Marco Caracciolo duly describe their cognitive approach as informed by “the embodiment of mental processes and socio-cultural practices.”³²⁵ They add two “E” words to 4E cognition—“experiential” and “emotional”—since to them these aspects of individual response form an integral aspect of the new paradigm. Pointing to the work of predecessors such as Monika Fludernik³²⁶ and David Herman,³²⁷ they use an arbitrary passage from Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* for an application of essential second-generation insights.

Readers have embodied responses to narrative because mirror neurons in the brain fire when they read about specific actions.³²⁸ They vicariously experience what the characters go through. In the Fielding passage, Squire Allworthy walks onto his terrace and sees the sun rise. According to Kukkonen and Caracciolo, readers “respond to the words on the page through their bodies,” in this case with “a feeling of elevation.”³²⁹ Informed by work in psychology on the specifics of (literary) reading, this fine-grained narrative analysis would gain strength if it were itself subject to empirical verification, but it can definitely help to identify the details of a text and thus enhance an understanding of the sense-making readers enter into when processing a specific narrative.

The work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson on metaphor³³⁰ (“one of the earliest applications of second-generation cognitive approaches”³³¹) inspires Kukkonen and Caracciolo to focus on the connection in the Fielding passage between Allworthy’s location and his character: “Allworthy’s benevolence emerges once the motion verbs have led us to the top of the hill on which he stands.”³³² Because it emerges through an entire set of connections with positive elements such as the majestic sun, the character’s benevolence forms a strong example of what Lawrence Barsalou calls “situated conceptualization.”³³³ The consideration of this extra cognitive dimension lifts the reading of the Fielding passage onto a level that combines the embodied responses with cultural resonances and individual history. The central concern of the second-generation approach is the “feedback loop” between “physical patterns of interaction with the world and cultural, linguistic meanings.”³³⁴

Caracciolo extends the investigation of this feedback loop by considering the nature of the individual experience of narrative. He argues firmly that “stories offer themselves as imaginative experiences because

*Caracciolo and
experientiality*

of the way they draw on and restructure readers' familiarity with experience itself."³³⁵ The "story-driven experience," as Caracciolo calls it throughout his monograph, takes shape in a network of responses marked on the one hand by "a tension between the textual design and the recipient's experiential background."³³⁶ This background rests on bodily, perceptual, and emotional elements, but it also includes higher-order cognitive functions and sociocultural practices; some will be appealed to or activated by the narrative, while others will be projected onto it. The other tension that determines the story-driven experience is that between "consciousness-attribution" (explained earlier on in the lead-up to the discussion of Alan Palmer's views) and "consciousness-enactment" (which refers to the partial overlap between the reader's "first-person undergoing of an experience" and "the experience attributed to a character").³³⁷

Taking issue with Palmer, Schneider, and David Herman, Caracciolo suggests that the centrality given to consciousness-enactment in his model of the story-driven experience implies a fuller exploration of the "qualia" or "sensory feels" that are critical to the second-generation approach.³³⁸ The triggering of consciousness-enactment, however, is a gradual process. In his analysis of the first part of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Caracciolo is careful: "As we read into Benjy's monologue, we feel that we are penetrating deeper into the character's consciousness, that we are increasingly familiar with his mental processes. But a character has no mental processes, and only seems to be conscious: in fact, our illusion is produced by the overlap" described above.³³⁹

While it could be argued that what Dorrit Cohn describes as quoted monologue would be a primary candidate for producing the illusion of consciousness penetration, Caracciolo suggests that the whole array of her modes of thought presentation (see chapter 1 of this handbook) can have this effect on the reader, an effect that ultimately depends on how a text connects with the reader's specific experiential background. Individual responses to narrative obviously also vary across the regions of the background. On the bodily-perceptual level, for instance, "recipients respond to the text by producing the sensory imaginings that simulate perception," perhaps making lasting impressions on readers.³⁴⁰ At the other end of the scale, on the level of sociocul-

tural practices, recipients will come up with “self-conscious interpretive responses to narrative, such as ethical judgments, aesthetic evaluations and literary-critical interpretations.”³⁴¹ All these may make them aware of how they interact with the world and may perhaps even affect this interaction.

Another theory of cognition that is making inroads into cognitive narratology is blending theory.³⁴² It is based on the relatively simple assumption “that we understand all sorts of semiotic representations by establishing conceptual links between certain features in the mental spaces³⁴³ prompted by the communication.”³⁴⁴ A “blend” is the new mental space that results from such a link between two input spaces. Blends are part of networks, the assemblage of which the developers of the theory, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, describe as follows: “Building an integration network involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backward to inputs, recruiting to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself.”³⁴⁵

*Blending and
the reader
(Martínez)*

María-Ángeles Martínez meticulously uses blending theory to further the study of why and how individuals are taken with a specific narrative. For her, a reader’s engagement with narrative results from and will be enhanced by the development of a “storyworld possible self,” the conceptual integration of two inputs by the reader: “One is the mental representation that readers build for the intradiegetic perspectivizing entity, [. . .] be it a focalizer [. . .] or the narrator. The other is the mental representation that readers entertain of themselves.”³⁴⁶ Channeling the notions of “self-schemas” and “possible selves” in psychology, Martínez’s storyworld possible self is a network of blends that will give direction to the processing of narrative and its interpretation.³⁴⁷ Take a book that partly deals with overcoming substance abuse, such as *A Million Little Pieces*, by James Frey. When early on in the act of reading, a narrator or focalizer’s perspective integrates with an aspect of a “drug user” self-schema, chances are that other themes will be blocked out and that certain decisions of the narrative processing will be informed by elements tied to the emerging network. Compared to other work on emotional involvement and empathy on the part of the reader, the storyworld possible selves approach has the advantage

of not being exclusively tied to feelings *for* characters but instead embraces readers' own feelings about themselves, which in order to become useful for intersubjectively testable interpretation are related to the cultural environment in which they appear.

While Martínez focuses on verbal cues for the onset of storyworld possible selves such as “double deictic you” and “generic one,”³⁴⁸ a graphic narrative like “City” also holds out possibilities for blends of the kind she describes. To begin with, the protagonist’s inconspicuous visual neutrality in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, or social class makes it an ideal nonverbal prompt for inclusiveness, so that readers can easily relate to what they construct as his internal focalization of the city. If the spaceship in which they land activates the reader’s familiarity with science fiction, the little alien could be seen as an explorer looking for signs of life; the tiny humanoid calls the dog’s attention to the bird in panel six, and then both seem to run after it in panel seven, but to no avail. The gate in panel fifteen seems to lead into what looks like a graveyard, with probably some if not all of the city’s human inhabitants buried there (panel sixteen). If the little alien has come to look for human life, it isn’t found. On the contrary, the alien finds what can be construed as evidence of death. This could definitely set off matches with readers’ feared possible selves in an apocalyptic scenario. The perceived character perspective on the city would thus blend with a feeling about the self that would be related to more general cultural attitudes, such as fears about the consequences of climate change.

If, on the other hand (as we have already suggested in the application of Schneider’s model on character construction), the spaceship does not function as a strong enough cue for the reader to recognize the little protagonist as a science fiction character, the focalization could be seen as that of a tourist who is visiting a city that is definitely weird and interesting. The alien’s facial expression is neutral enough to be interpreted as interest. At a time when moving around the world has never been easier and when people are seeking out special destinations in order to enrich their lives, this perspective on the city could easily blend with the tourist (possible) self and thus lead to a storyworld possible self in which the graveyard panel would not feature as a sign of human disaster but rather as another illustration of the reasons for visiting the city. The storyworld possible selves approach ev-

idently cries out for empirical verification, but it manages to combine specific thoughts and feelings on the part of individual readers with the details of narrative representation.

3. Narratology and Ideology

Postclassical narratologies no longer regard narratives as abstract structures detached from their author, context, and reader. On the contrary, they focus on the actual production, function, and comprehension of the text, and in so doing they lay bare the values, norms, and ideologies involved.

3.1. *Narrative Ethics*

Structuralism cannot be said to be blind to the ideology and the values that are present in a literary text.³⁴⁹ On the contrary, Greimas's structuralist semantics have always been concerned with the ideological oppositions and preferences that are tied to the organization of the text. Even if ideology is defined neutrally—that is to say, as a worldview and a view of humankind—it undeniably comprises a hierarchy and therefore a set of preferences.³⁵⁰ Greimas-style analyses can clarify these preferences. For instance, in a particular narrative the feminine may always be connected to what is light and good, while the masculine may be associated with what is dark and false.

Classical legacy

Nevertheless, such a structuralist approach sharply differs from contemporary ideological analyses. First, structuralists often reduce the ideology to a code, a system that is thought to be inherently present in the text and that therefore downplays the role of the reader. In contrast, contemporary approaches emphasize the importance of the reader. Second, the attention to ideology is almost completely absent from Genette-style narratology.

Let us start with the second point. Genette wants to distinguish focalization types in a technical way and therefore does not take into account the historical development of the subject concept, which nonetheless determines these types and their reception by the reader. Multiple focalization may suggest that the subject is represented in the text as a fragmentary or heterogeneous entity, and this may be connected with a certain view of humankind in the social and historical context. There is little or no room for this insight in classical nar-

ratology. Even temporal structure, which may at first sight seem to be without value, might actually be ideologically loaded. If Thomas Pynchon in *Gravity's Rainbow* pulls the reader's leg by inspiring confidence in a realistic chronology while at the same time sabotaging it through carefully hidden impossibilities, he unhinges an entire worldview. Genette has set up his tidy temporal categories but hardly pays attention to their ideological dimensions and their content. He limits their concrete meaning to their function in Proust's work.

As to the first point—the reduction of ideology to a semiotic code—we can start with Roland Barthes. According to him, a story contains codes that refer directly or indirectly to social values, norms, and beliefs.³⁵¹ An example of this is the cultural code, which connects all textual elements referring to the social domains of science, knowledge, and ideas. Textual elements can thus be organized starting from one's psychoanalytical knowledge, which may lead to the connection of all the fragments that refer to an Oedipus complex. In Barthes's concrete analysis, however, the reader disappears and only the codes are dealt with.

The same happens in Philippe Hamon's structuralist study of ideology.³⁵² The reader's work is minimized, while the urgency of the text is maximized. Ideology is studied as the "ideology-effect," but this effect is not conceived of as the reader's work. On the contrary, Hamon says that the normative aspect of the whole process derives from the formal characteristics inherent in the text.³⁵³ He pays much attention to the representation of consciousness: the way in which characters think and talk shows the values and norms that a text displays and imposes.³⁵⁴ Obviously, these values are not independent of the extratextual value scales and the interpretations of the reader, but Hamon does not focus on either of these two aspects.

*Extension of
the legacy?*

Many attempts have been made to align these two readerly aspects with the structuralist patterns of thought. A good example is the early work of Liesbeth Korthals Altes.³⁵⁵ She studies ideology in *Le Roi des aulnes* (published in English as *The Ogre*), a novel by the French author Michel Tournier, and tries to reconcile Greimas-style semantics with hermeneutical attention to the reader. Her terminology strongly resembles Hamon's. She talks about the "value-effect" of the text, an effect that she suggests is controlled by the text itself. This happens on three levels. The first two are the well-known structuralist layers of

narrative and narration. For the analysis of narrative, Korthals Altes uses Greimas's analysis of actions by characters; for the analysis of narration she builds on M. M. Bakhtin's work, which we will encounter again shortly. The third level, that of reading, seems to be an extension of structuralism, but the description of reading as text-driven programming makes clear that here as well the text itself does all the work. The reader is programmed by the system of the text. In later work, as we will see shortly, Korthals Altes focuses much more on the reader's contribution.

A similar attempt to expand classical structuralism can be found in the work of Vincent Jouve, who combines Hamon's views with those of Korthals Altes.³⁵⁶ He also investigates the "value-effect" and thinks that the text itself is capable of creating that effect or even imposing it. Just like Korthals Altes, Jouve studies on three levels the values displayed and imposed by the work. At the level of narrative, he too uses Greimas's grammar of the characters' actions. He pays considerable attention to the ethics imposed by the evolution of the events and by the final outcome. Morals on this level are exemplified by the plot, which cannot be isolated from the characters, all of whom are carriers of an ideology. Focalization also receives a heavy ideological load, which is not surprising because it literally and figuratively involves a standpoint, an attitude.

At the level of narration, Jouve shows that consciousness representation and the narrator inevitably demonstrate certain preferences and value judgments. In representing the thoughts and feelings of characters, these values are especially apparent in the choice of words, in the syntax, and in their implicit or explicit orientation toward the other characters. Jouve discusses the narrator's ideology by means of the implied author—a concept that is absent from Genette's classical narratology but that fits Jouve's attempt to expand the text. Moreover, the construct of the implied author can provide an ultimate point of reference that remains indispensable for a structuralist like Jouve. Paradoxically, Jouve uses a problematic and nonstructuralist concept in order to safeguard an orderly structure.

Even broader than the implied author is Jouve's third level, which he describes as the level of the reader but which in practice remains a textual domain. In terms reminiscent of Korthals Altes, he talks about

how the text programs reading. This programming is claimed to come about in addresses to the reader (in which readers supposedly identify with the narratee) and in all kinds of paratextual and intertextual elements such as the subtitle, the preface, and references to other texts. In a move similar to the strategy of Korthals Altes, Jouve introduces the reader on his third level with the help of a theorist—in this case Michel Picard, who makes a distinction between a reading that remains detached and one in which the reader identifies with characters or actions.³⁵⁷ Once more, this reference to the reader's expectations and attitudes remains secondary to the text, which is considered to be the driving force.

*Steering between
classical and
postclassical*

Perhaps this emphasis on the text is not such a bad idea after all. The attention to ideology might damage narratology's practical applicability and utility. The historical and geographical refinements triggered by this choice of focus may lead to a multitude of options that inevitably constrain applicability and do not always lead to a better systematization. For narratologists who do not want to give up this systematization, it is crucial to steer a middle course between classical methodology and postclassical ideological interpretation.

This means, first of all, that one reveals the ideological baggage of a text and puts it into perspective and, second, that one estimates the importance of this baggage for one's own theory. The work of M. M. Bakhtin provides an excellent first step in this direction. He considered the novel to be a polyphonous genre and showed in his work on Dostoyevsky how every novel is a texture made up of registers and forms of language that each imply a specific ideology.³⁵⁸ Bakhtin especially focuses on voice or, in structuralist terms, on the level of narration. Literary theory has to reflect the fact that a literary text is a confrontation of textual layers and ideologies, which means theory also has to be many-voiced, or polyphonous. In some postclassical approaches, which we will discuss shortly, the polyphony of theory is regarded as an ethical question, a kind of resistance to the monophony and intolerance of authoritarian ideology.

In the slipstream of Bakhtin's work, Boris Uspensky concentrates on the polyphony of fictional devices to stage a point of view. The first aspect of this polyphony is the "ideological plane"; it is studied primarily by looking at "author, narrator and character as possible vehicles of

ideological viewpoint.”³⁵⁹ Uspensky suggests, for example, that a likable character may be intended as an example of a correct or a good value system, but he immediately adds that this is not necessarily the case. A specific narrative technique—in this case the favorable presentation of a character—does not always have a consistent ideological meaning. In one story a likable character may indeed be the carrier of a positive value system, while in another story likability may incorporate all kinds of negative values. Moreover, it is obvious that the reader can resist this type of ideological manipulation. The narrator may also anticipate this resistance, characters may display contradictory ideologies, or their ideology may not match their actions. As a result, it becomes impossible to identify a clear and compelling relationship between narrative technique X and ideological meaning Y.

To refine and complement the study of the “ideological plane,” Uspensky proposes three more aspects: the “phraseological plane” (including the language of the narrator or of a character), the “spatial and temporal plane” (involving the perspective of the narrative, an example being the bird’s-eye view), and the “psychological plane” (such as the “external/internal view of the person who is described,” or the “unchanging/changing authorial position in narration”).³⁶⁰ The combination of the four planes should give a good idea of the textual and ideological polyphony, but it remains anchored in the text itself.

To postclassical narratologists, narrative texts by themselves are no longer carriers of values—as the structuralists wanted them to be—and do not function as compelling programming languages for the reader either. Texts lose their unassailable power. They are no longer at the top of a hierarchical relationship that would condemn the reader to a lower position. They are now integrated into a horizontal interaction between equivalent communication partners—in this case, text and reader. Postclassical ethical narratology uses a frame of reference that differs from the classical one. The central role is not assigned to just one element—the text—but to the interaction. That is why the issue is no longer the ethics of literature but the so-called ethics of reading.

The two frames of reference appearing time and again in this connection are rhetorics and pragmatics. Rhetorics considers a story to be an attempt to persuade the reader by means of all kinds of techniques. These techniques themselves are no longer analyzed in their

*Postclassical
readers*

*Ethics and
rhetorics*

own right—as in structuralism—but they are studied in terms of their orientation to and effects on the reader. Insecure narrators may have different intentions: perhaps they want to make readers insecure as well or even to seduce them or make them curious. The nature, meaning, and function of a narrative strategy become clear only when readers consider these effects. It is no longer sufficient to limit oneself, as a structuralist would, to the relationship between the narrator and the fictional universe. The reader's world now plays a crucial role. As we have already suggested at the outset of our sections on communicative approaches, this leads directly to pragmatics, which regards a text as a form of communication, with a sender, a message, and a receiver.

To Phelan and Rabinowitz, the reader plays a central role in the ideological workings of a text. In terms of the distinction between the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic aspects of narrative texts, they claim that the ideological reading is especially geared toward the thematic dimension: "Responses to the thematic component involve readers' interests in the ideational function of the characters and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues being addressed by the narrative."³⁶¹

Peter Rabinowitz distinguishes four rules of reading.³⁶² First, the rules of notice: a reader pays attention only to certain aspects of the text; others are often simply ignored. Second, there are the rules of signification, which are used by readers to assign a (possibly symbolic) meaning to any aspect that attracts their attention. This consists of connecting such aspects to the reader's everyday experience by interpreting, for example, characters as if they were actual human beings with a specific psychological profile.

The "rules of snap moral judgment" are a specific, and for our purposes essential, subset of the rules of signification and involve "quick judgments" rather than long and nuanced deliberations.³⁶³ Apart from direct and explicit moral judgments uttered by narrators and/or characters, two categories can be distinguished here: "metaphorical rules of appearance and metonymic rules of enchainment."³⁶⁴ The first makes "it appropriate to assume that physical or verbal characteristics stand for moral qualities."³⁶⁵ For instance, someone who dresses like a dandy may be an unreliable person. The second category operates via contiguity and invites the reader to conclude that one represented aspect (e.g.,

bad taste in women) will go together with other (equally bad) characteristics. Rabinowitz offers this example: “In *Gatsby*, we are surely not meant to be surprised when a man who has fixed the World Series—and who is Jewish and talks with an accent to boot—refuses to attend his friend’s funeral.”³⁶⁶ Third, the reader also uses the rules of configuration to connect different textual fragments to each other. This creates patterns that are neither exclusively textual nor exclusively determined by the reader’s expectations but rather are the results of a fusion between the two. Finally, the reader applies the rules of coherence to transform the text into a coherent whole that nevertheless leaves room for paradoxes and deviations.

In *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* (2014), Liesbeth Korthals Altes develops the notion of ethos attribution to come to grips with the reader’s ideological work when processing narrative. The notion of ethos derives from Aristotle’s treatise *On Rhetoric*: “[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence.”³⁶⁷ Two components of ethos specifically relate to the reader: *arete*, “the audience’s belief in the speaker’s good character or virtue [. . .], in particular his honesty and sincerity,” and *eunoia*, which “refers to the means for convincing an audience of the speaker’s good intentions.”³⁶⁸ In the view of Korthals Altes readers construct an ethos for the author of a (literary) narrative, and for this purpose they connect first and foremost with the author’s “posture,” defined by Jérôme Meizoz (as we have explained in chapter 1) as “an author’s ‘mode of self-presentation’” tied to the possibilities and constraints of the literary field.³⁶⁹

In this way Korthals Altes, like most postclassical readers, puts the reader front and center. However, she does not look at the idealized or concrete figure of the reader (as rhetorical or empirical approaches might do) but at the process of meaning-making in which he or she is involved. More specifically, she studies the hermeneutic and cognitive processes implied in interpreting literary texts and claims that authorial ethos—a mixture composed by the reader, the author, the text, and the context—plays a determining role in these processes. Her reflections on hermeneutic and cognitive processes are united in what she calls “a metahermeneutic narratology, which investigates conventions that intervene in meaning-making processes.”³⁷⁰

This metalevel, which reflects on the frames and concepts narratology uses and which pays attention to social and cultural contexts, is combined with a concrete analysis of narrative texts. In these analyses Korthals Altes does not want to fix a final and correct reading (e.g., one that is faithful to the implied author), but she concentrates on the conditions that lie beneath the definition of such a reading. She simultaneously shows that narrative fiction typically goes against such a fixation: "Literary works often make their readers do some cognitive gymnastics by setting out ambiguous or contradictory framing clues concerning ethos and intention attributions."³⁷¹ As a result, her view on ethos attribution diverges from the rhetorical attempt (witnessed by Phelan and Rabinowitz) to arrive at the "right" meaning, intended by the author: "My own privileged image for readers' ethos attributions and for their engagement with narrative more generally is that of the kaleidoscope. The kaleidoscope stands for viewing from a certain angle, under a certain aspect, and for reframing a scene or a mental representation with the wonder of seeing configurations change before our own eyes."³⁷²

Korthals Altes links this ambiguity and oscillation not just to specific narrative techniques but also to modes, such as irony, and to genres, such as autofiction. In her concrete analyses she still falls back on the toolbox of classical narratology but to a lesser extent than in the early work we discussed above and only to connect her findings with an investigation into the various value regimes that determine readings in a specific time and place. As a result, she manages to chart a metahermeneutic position from which to consider conflicts of interpretation, as in the case of Dave Eggers or the French writer Michel Houellebecq.

*Ethics and
Wasco*

A willing reader may find value in the way Wasco handles the generic framework that could be said to dominate "City." Science fiction often voices, implies, or activates doubts about the development of technology. However, apart from the space travel suggested by the device that has taken the little alien and the dog to their destination, "City" does not foreground this essential element in the long-established code of the genre. Instead it playfully combines the code with the script of a tourist visit to the city. As we also explain elsewhere, the alien and the dog may very well appear to be tourists who arrive for a quick visit, take in the sights, relax, and return home. The combination of the

science fiction script of visiting/exploring/conquering new worlds with the touristic trip may lead the reader to wonder about the ethics of such visits and explorations. Is a touristic visit a bit like conquering a city?

The wish to attribute value to the generic polyphony in “City” (as opposed to rejecting it for what would then presumably be called its silliness) may be enhanced by the posture readers develop with respect to the author, Wasco. If they know he also publishes pornographic work inspired by bondage strips from the 1950s, they may well imagine he has a generic command that will occasionally lead to experiments with the code. And sure enough, in a rare interview the artist confirms this experimental aspect of his work as a conscious goal.³⁷³ If readers don’t know anything about Wasco, their attribution of value to “City” may derive from a personal preference for generic sophistication or indeed from a reading environment in which the appreciation of smart oddity brings about more cultural capital. Metahermeneutic though it may seem, this view of “City” is primarily based on the perceived cuteness of its central characters.

It is not surprising that many narratological studies of the ethical interaction between text and reader devote much attention to the narrator and the characters. First, this preference is in line with the expanded structuralist approach (Jouve, early Korthals Altes) and Bakhtin’s work. Second, narrators and characters are the most anthropomorphous narrative elements. In view of the fact that ethical judgments nearly always pertain to people and considering that rhetorical and pragmatic approaches focus on the relationship between text and human being, these anthropomorphous entities are the preferred points of departure—which of course is not to say that there is no attention for other narrative elements.

*The text as a
human being*

In the case of the ethics of reading, the connection between text and human being is sometimes taken so literally that the text itself is taken as a human being. The most famous and influential example of this can be found in *The Company We Keep*, in which Wayne Booth extends his earlier, text-based narratology to an ethics of reading. According to Booth, narrators of stories present themselves to readers as potential friends. Stories are “gifts from would-be friends.”³⁷⁴ Narrators “claim to offer us some moments together that will add to our lives.”³⁷⁵ The reader may feel disappointed when it turns out that

the narrator does not live up to these expectations. The story's value and ethical dimension are shaped by the extent to which narrators keep their promise of friendship. Once more, this value judgment is not unidirectional. The text does not impose, but readers are not totally free either. In their judgment they can adjust and change their already existing criteria. In any case, they judge not only the story but also their own capacity to judge the story: "We judge ourselves as we judge the offer."³⁷⁶

The judgment's rigor and accuracy depend on the nature of the friendship. Booth distinguishes different kinds of friendship and thus also different kinds of books. He uses seven criteria in order to do so, including quantity (a friend you see often is more demanding and can be judged better than someone you meet only once a year) and intimacy (the more intimate a relationship is, the greater the demands and the more accurate the judgment will be).³⁷⁷ The value of the text and the reading cannot be separated from the friendship: good readers, as well as good books, are like good friends.

A comparable anthropomorphization of the text can be found in Adam Newton's *Narrative Ethics*. He is inspired by the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, who considers the presence of others to be an appeal to the self. The narrative text similarly appeals to the reader: "Like persons, texts present themselves and expose themselves; the claim they make on me does not begin with dedicating myself to them, but rather precedes my discovery of the claim."³⁷⁸ Newton studies this ethical appeal on three levels: narration, narrative, and the reader's interpretation. This corresponds perfectly to the expanded structuralist approach we found with early Korthals Altes and Jouve. They extended the familiar levels of narrative and narration with a third domain as well, that of the reader and the act of reading.

Just like the other two narratologists, Newton holds on to the text's almost compelling power. He writes about "the imperative aspect of literature" and argues that an ethical or good reading becomes possible only when the reader heeds that imperative.³⁷⁹ Only then is the reader's reaction legitimate. Only then does "response as responsibility" function.³⁸⁰ Newton places this response in the Bakhtinian tradition, as a dialogue between text and reader that is a reflection of the polyphonous, dialogical character of the text itself.³⁸¹

Levinas and the appeal to the reader are also present in the work on narrative ethics carried out by Roger Sell and more generally by the Åbo Akademi in Turku, Finland. They combine the communicative approach we discussed above with the philosophical ethics of conversation. Literature is “basically a kind of dialogue” and can therefore be studied from an evaluative and ideological standpoint: “[T]he same ethical criterion can be applied to the writer-respondent relationship as to human interaction of any other kind. What Åbo research is endorsing here is nothing less than the universal human right to respect and fair treatment.”³⁸² Ethical communication works both ways. If a study focuses on the respect that readers show toward writers, Åbo scholars call it “mediating criticism”; if it stresses the respect that writers extend to readers, they talk about “communicational criticism.”³⁸³ In both cases a distinction is to be made between genuine communication, “in which people fully recognize each other’s human rights and personal autonomy,” and distorted communication, which is hierarchical and imposes power relations.³⁸⁴ An ethical narrative reading is a form of genuine communication.

*The text as
human dialogue*

This brings us to a curious ambiguity of many reader-oriented approaches. On the one hand they emphasize the importance of the reader; on the other hand they often fall back upon characteristics that supposedly form part of the text itself and function as compelling entities. They seem to be afraid that the ethics of reading will lapse into an ethics of the subjective reader if the power of the text is rejected. Even a deconstructivist such as Joseph Hillis Miller writes about the law that is supposedly issued by a text. But his approach already makes room for deviations from this law and may thus be used as a theoretical systematization of the ambiguity that has just been observed.

The text as law

On the one hand Miller argues that a literary text shapes “the law as such” and that the act of reading should be subjected to this law.³⁸⁵ On the other hand the reader can never fully grasp the law, which implies two things. First, every attempt to make the ethical law of a literary genre explicit will deform this law. Every readerly attempt to approach the law constitutes a deviation from the law: “this law forces the reader to betray the text or deviate from it in the act of reading it, in the name of a higher demand that can yet be reached only by way of the text.”³⁸⁶ Second, this law is not “in” the text, as a letter or a mes-

*Ethics as
transgression*

sage is in an envelope. It constantly escapes the formulations of the story. It is never directly or literally present; it is only there as a manner of speaking—figuratively. Or better, the law is a figure of speech that can be approached only in the story's figures of speech.³⁸⁷

That is why narrative ethics has to concentrate on the study of the text's metaphors and metonyms. Stories do not literally say what the law is, but they talk about it in similes. The reader has to respect these similes—he or she should not translate them into simple, literal descriptions such as, "In fact, Mutsaers wants to say that we do not need to follow rules." At the same time, this respect for the figures of speech will always be a betrayal: if one does not want to translate figurative language, one can only try to grasp it in other, new images. As a result, the act of reading becomes an endless unfurling of constantly renewed images. An unstoppable stream of tropes is set in motion, and it is precisely this stream that shapes the reading that does justice to the text. Reading becomes a form of "figuring it out," a development of the figures of speech.³⁸⁸

*Ethics and
morality*

For Miller, a good, ethical reading is endless and undecided. In every attempt to approach the law, this reading moves away from it. That is why it never attains the simplicity of a moral or a lesson. Ethics is distinct from morality by remaining undecided. It vacillates between law and transgression, approach and deviation. This uncertainty makes the text literary and makes the reading ethical instead of moralizing. Just like the text itself, the act of reading has to be an infinite unfurling of images. Reading is never finished, and in that sense the text is unreadable. That is why Miller sees "the unreadability of the text" as the outstanding characteristic of the "true ethics of reading."³⁸⁹

For Hanna Meretoja on the other hand, an ethical reading is tied to the ethical potential of narrative. As she sees it, hermeneutic narrative ethics explores this potential as a culturally mediated interpretive practice, which seems to indicate a degree of relativism, but at the same time she insists that "the hermeneutic ethos implies a commitment to the view that we can learn something from literature."³⁹⁰ Developing the starting point for her argument that narratives have the power to cultivate our sense of the possible, Meretoja distinguishes between a further five good effects that may transpire: "narratives can (2) contribute to personal and cultural self-understanding; (3) provide

an ethical mode of understanding other lives and experiences 'non-subsumptively' in their singularity; (4) establish, challenge, and transform narrative [interactions]; (5) develop our perspective-awareness and our capacity for perspective-taking; and (6) function as a mode of ethical inquiry."³⁹¹ While she is just as convinced as Miller that interpretation is never finished, her illustrations of these effects always accentuate the positive. For instance, in a reading of Jonathan Littell's *Les Bienvieillantes* (published in English as *The Kindly Ones*), a novel about the Holocaust narrated by a former SS officer, Meretoja finds great value in the use of first-person narration. She predicts it does not lead to empathy or identification but still creates a perspective on the terrible events, one that works against standard reactions of hate.

In Jakob Lothe's analysis of readerly reactions to *The Kindly Ones*, the real reader also disappears and is replaced by the reader envisaged by the implied author.³⁹² Lothe traces the interplay between implied author, I-narrator, and ideal reader in the development of the plot (the five murders committed by the Nazi narrator) as a change in the narrator's reliability and authority. Contrary to Meretoja, Lothe submits that it is this change, and thus not the I-narration itself, that forces the reader to face moral issues he or she might want to avoid.

Miller, Meretoja, and Lothe all deal with an idealized reader, a projection of their own way of interpreting narratives. Empirical studies criticize this unrealistic approach and tend to be scornful when it comes to the ethical effects texts may have on readers.³⁹³ This, however, has not deterred narratologists from developing exactly that type of approach.

In Miller's case the ethics of reading ties in with the attention to figures of speech. "Pegasian" teems with imagery, and the story literally and figuratively refuses to take a definitive position. Many of these images, such as the central metaphor of dressage, evoke power. The riding master tries to discipline the girl, while she tries to train the horse in turn. The end of the story shows that nobody really is in control. The riding master does not manage to subject the girl, and she does not succeed in training the horse. But she goes up in the air all the same. Or better, that is precisely why she goes up in the air. Thanks to the undecidability ("Whatever"), the goal has been reached.

Perhaps this refusal to exercise power is the best way to get things

*Ethics and
Mutsaers*

done. And in that way, it really is dressage. This dressage is used explicitly as a metaphor for life: “true dressage, just like real life, doesn’t have anything to do with racing.” It is not the speed that counts but “the sensation” you get while riding. The goal is not to arrive as fast as possible but to be on your way. The goal is undecidability, being neither here nor there. The ethical aspect of the text resides in the constant alternation of images and viewpoints and in the refusal to choose a single viewpoint. The ethical aspect of a narratological reading resides in the unfurling of these images and in the suggestion of undecidability.

There is still room for classical narratology here. The undecidability in question is undoubtedly enhanced by the story’s variable focalization and free indirect speech. The latter sometimes makes it impossible to figure out who is talking: the riding master, the rider, or the narrator. In this connection the invisibility of the extradiegetic narrator can also be seen as a means to relinquish omniscient and moralizing power. The narrator does not want dressage, as the exercise of power, either. In the end this narrator will not interfere or choose sides or formulate a moral.

Nevertheless, the reader can ignore the uncertainty and read the ending as a nearly Machiavellian moral: it does not matter how you get there as long as you get there. For Miller this would reduce ethics to morality. It would stop the narrative pendulum between various views and images, but there is no element in the text that can prevent the reader from such a moralizing interpretation. The images, the focalization, the free indirect speech, and the invisible narrator—none of them can compel the reader. Just about every narratologist working on an ethics of reading agrees with Booth when he says, “Systematic correlations between a given technique, open or closed, and a given ethical (or for that matter aesthetic) effect, are, I now think, always suspect.”³⁹⁴

Ethics and Krol

What was said about the image of dressage in the story by Mutsaers holds for Krol’s image of the map as well. This text also centers on an image of power and a metaphor of life. The boy wants to map his life and discovers that by doing so he brings it to a halt. This is clarified in the story by means of the image of the bike trip, which can be compared to Mutsaers’s horse ride. As soon as the boy has gone somewhere and has indicated this location on his map, the trip becomes meaningless. The goal has been reached, the trip has become superfluous:

"Some roads (and the number increased) I traveled two times or more, but this did not count. To have been there once is to be there always; my map indicated this."

"Pegasian" shows what the endless movement of the pendulum and of being-on-one's-way can lead to: success. The story shows what you can achieve if you do not exercise any power. "The Map," on the contrary, shows how the endless movement of the pendulum stops when you do want to exercise power. And then even power becomes meaningless. The map becomes uninteresting as soon as it has exercised its power. Once everything has been put on the map, the first-person narrator takes it off the wall: "It had become meaningless. I haven't kept it either." This ending is almost the opposite of the one in the story by Mutsaers, but both stories show that value (in these stories, of dressage and the map) lies in being on one's way to this value and not in reaching the goal.

Following Miller, we have emphasized figures of speech as a potential starting point for illustrating the openness of a text. This openness is considered to make up the value of both the text and its interpretation. Many forms of narrative ethics, however, choose a different point of departure, one that ties in with the already mentioned interest in the text's anthropomorphous centers. We are thinking specifically about the unreliable narrator, whom Booth considers a "pretender" instead of a friend.³⁹⁵ This narrator is seen by Chambers as being part of the inevitably risky seduction strategy.³⁹⁶ In Newton's approach the unreliability would fit into the "shaping of power relations" that, according to him, are inherent in narration as an appeal to the reader.³⁹⁷

James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin start from the unreliable homodiegetic first-person narrator to draw conclusions about the "ethical positioning" of the reader.³⁹⁸ The unreliability of such narrators is triggered by their double roles as both character and narrator. As a character this type of narrator may very well come across as a reliable person, while as a narrator the same figure may be unreliable. This ambiguity is often left unresolved in the text and can even contribute to the value of that text.³⁹⁹ The reader often cannot tell whether the narrator is reliable or not or good or bad, ethically speaking. Should readers want to come to a conclusion, they will have to activate their own ethical values and desires.⁴⁰⁰

*Ethics and
unreliability*

People sharing Miller's preference for openness will call this a moralizing rather than an ethical reading. If Monika Fludernik is right when she says that unreliable narration is the essential characteristic of fictional narrative texts, this type of reading could even be considered a failure to appreciate the core of fiction.⁴⁰¹ If we return to the three levels of classical narratology, we could describe moralizing reading as an evaluation of the story, in isolation from narrative and narration. A novel could be rejected, for instance, on the basis of the events described in it—for example, the adultery in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*—or because of the allegedly despicable characteristics of the actantial roles—for instance, the negative characteristics of the female figures. This involves an evaluation of elements that are part of the fabula and that therefore remain outside the literary organization of the syuzhet. In other words, it concerns judgments that disregard the narrative and fictional character of the text—fictional as defined by Fludernik. In this case, one specific ideology (for example, one that is politically correct) would be opposed to another (for example, one that is not politically correct).

3.2. *Feminist and Queer Narratology*

Narrative ethics is not the most famous example of the ideology-related developments in contemporary narrative theory. Undoubtedly, feminist narratology can lay claim to that status. It is also one of the most influential approaches: there is probably no other postclassical narrative theory that has analyzed, influenced, and modified so many aspects of narratology.⁴⁰² Since the 1980s it has been investigating the relationship between narrative texts and narratological theories on the one hand and sex, gender, and sexual orientation on the other. "Sex" is the term used for the biological distinction between men and women, while "gender" refers to the social construction of the sexes. This construction is most often related to sexual orientation. The traditional construction of the roles of men and women includes a heterosexual preference. Gender cannot be disconnected from sex and sexuality even if it does not coincide with them.

*Classical
exclusion*

Feminist narratology shows that gender, sex, and sexuality play a central role in the construction and interpretation of narrative texts, while classical narratology excludes these three aspects. As

Susan Lanser observes in her influential essay “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” this exclusion is related to the gender of canonized narratologists and of the texts used by them.⁴⁰³ It usually involves not only male theoreticians (Stanzel, Genette, Chatman, Prince) but also male writers. Many so-called universal concepts from classical narrative theory and many allegedly universal characteristics of literary texts are in fact typical of a specific period—for narratology this is usually structuralism, while for literature this means mostly fiction up to and including modernism—as well as a specific culture and a specific (predominantly male) population.

Narratology is not universal or neutral. It is colored by the context in which it functions, and this context consists of a whole series of factors, such as social class, sex, age, economic and professional position, physical condition, and education. Every narratological concept bears traces of this context, and feminist theoreticians argue that these traces are ideological to the extent that they express the power relations of that context. The structuralist desire to classify, survey, and master, for instance, is the expression of a typically Western and male view of knowledge. More generally, Lanser says in her fundamental *Fictions of Authority* “that even the broadest, most obvious elements of narration are ideologically charged and socially variable, sensitive to gender differences in ways that have not been recognized.”⁴⁰⁴ By paying attention to the more general and ideological context, feminist narratology is part of the expansion that is typical of nearly all postclassical forms of narratology. Feminist narratologists such as Robyn Warhol and Kathy Mezei join forces with “contextualist narratology,” which has to complement and correct classical narratology.⁴⁰⁵

It is obviously impossible to map the entire context of a text and a theory. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, following Louis Althusser, talks about an “overdetermination” (*surdétermination*) of contextual factors: human beings are influenced by so many factors that they can never have a complete picture of them, let alone systematize them.⁴⁰⁶ This blindness may lead to the illusion of freedom or to the feeling that one can choose one specific factor as the most important one. In reality no single factor can function without influencing the entire network. Gender functions differently with an old, rich, white academic than with a young, poor Asian immigrant—to say nothing

*Feminist
exclusion?*

about looks and health. Especially in the early stages of feminist narratology, the eagerness to introduce gender into the textual analysis tended to downplay the role of factors such as class, age, and education. This has been rectified in recent years by embracing “intersectionality,” a concept that accommodates the “overdetermination” we have just mentioned.

*Shifts in feminist
narratology*

Simplifying matters, one might propose three stages in the evolution of gender-conscious narrative theory. The phases can be situated respectively in the 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2000s.⁴⁰⁷ In feminist scholars’ first move, directed against the gender blindness of structuralism, the role of gender looked foundational, sometimes even deterministic, as if narrative forms were the result of gender. Lanser argued, for instance, that feminist narratology cannot find definitive correlations between ideology and narrative form, only to claim later that there are causal relations between gender and genre.⁴⁰⁸

While the earliest phase gave the impression that gender guided the text, the second step in the development of feminist narratology seems to hold the reverse. Warhol says that the first feminist narratologists accepted gender as a category that precedes the text, while later approaches argue that the narrative text shapes gender.⁴⁰⁹ A good example can be found in Sally Robinson’s study *Engendering the Subject*, which starts with this sentence: “I am concerned with how gender is produced through narrative processes, not prior to them.”⁴¹⁰ This move toward gender as a (linguistic and narrative) construction ties in with the performative view on gender, exemplified by the work of Judith Butler.⁴¹¹ This means that the text is no longer considered to be the reflection of a given ideology but to be its construction. Obviously, this construction is not free; it is influenced by the context. This results in a nearly dialectical relationship between narrative technique and ideology. As Lanser puts it, narrative technique is not so much a product of ideology but rather the ideology itself.⁴¹²

*Intersectionality
and bricolage*

In recent years the study of the performative aspect has been broadened to include factors such as class and age, which structure the performance. In 1989 Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” to describe the intricate and multidirectional relations that exist between domains such as race, class, gender, age, and economic status and that are crucial to hierarchic relations of dominance and subser-

vience.⁴¹³ As Lanser wrote in 2015, “the intersectional approach is now pervasive in feminist scholarship yet still untapped for the study of narrative.”⁴¹⁴ She clarifies the term as follows: “intersectionality argues that multiple aspects of identity—gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, global position, age, sexuality, ability, religion, language, historical moment—converge and interact to create actual or perceived social positions, meanings, experiences, and representations in a world patterned by structural inequalities.”⁴¹⁵

As we said before, it is not feasible to pay attention to all these intersecting factors in a narrative analysis. In an effort to map as many sections as possible, recent feminist narratology has directed its attention to empirical studies⁴¹⁶ and “big data,” following the leads given by digital humanities⁴¹⁷ and by Franco Moretti’s “distant reading.” Lanser suggests “that we might venture the kind of large-scale inquiry that Franco Moretti models in *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, bringing an intersectional understanding of time and place to an analysis of how individual narratives and groups of narratives work out the dynamics of identity (i.e., character) and movement (i.e., plot), and then map those dynamics across the vast field of the world’s narratives in a new kind of historicist project that would offer a “distant reading” of narrative form.”⁴¹⁸ With such a vast corpus, taken from all over the world and from all periods across history, feminist narratology would no longer be vulnerable to the well-known criticism that it restricts its analyses to a limited canon, both in time (basically the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and place (basically the Western world, with white authors the overwhelming majority).⁴¹⁹

With intersectionality, distant reading, and an almost limitless corpus, feminist narratology has become a “pluralist *bricolage*.”⁴²⁰ As Robyn Warhol states, “What began as a ‘feminist narratology’ that focused on the impact of culturally constructed gender upon the form and reception of narrative texts has broadened to feminist narratologies that include race, sexuality, nationality, class, and ethnicity as well as gender in their analysis of texts.”⁴²¹ This is not seen as a disadvantage but as a welcome (and unavoidable) resistance to unified, homogeneous, and universalistic supertheories, typical of classical, heteronormative approaches.

By embracing its inner conflicts, tensions, and even paradoxes, fem-

inism comes close to queer theory, which became dominant in the late 1990s and which refuses fixed categorizations, clear boundaries, and resolving syntheses.⁴²² In line with Judith Butler, Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan argue that the term turns insult into defiance and thereby rejects the traditional hierarchies. The semantic range of “queer” has become very broad: “In principle this is a stance that denies and interrogates the privileges of heterosexuality and tries to openly question dominant ideas of normalcy and appropriate behaviour. The adoption of the term ‘queer’ suggests a blurring of boundaries between straight and gay sex and validates those who would in the past have been considered sexual ‘outlaws.’”⁴²³

It is only fitting then that this rapprochement between feminism and queer theory is itself fervently contested.⁴²⁴ At any rate, present-day feminist narratology rarely posits binary oppositions such as “male versus female” or “heterosexual versus homosexual,” but it accepts the primacy of the sliding scale, the in-between.⁴²⁵ Lanser, for instance, argues “that binaries are less useful than spectra.”⁴²⁶ Whereas the first phase of feminist narratology sometimes seems to suggest that there are typically male or female narrative strategies, it looks like most feminist narratologists would now agree with Ruth Page’s claim that “it is not possible to propose incontestable links between gender and narrative form.”⁴²⁷ According to her, form depends on a large number of factors such as content, function, and context. The selection of one factor inevitably entails an ideological bias. Even with respect to narratives that directly deal with gender-related subjects such as birth, Page argues that narrative strategies are not determined by the speaker’s gender. She rejects the feminist presupposition that the speaker’s gender can explain the form of the narrative.⁴²⁸ This fits the qualification in our discussion of narrative ethics: there is no compelling or causal connection between a formal textual element and a contextual, ideological element. A specific narrative strategy is not the direct consequence of a specific ideological position, and neither does it lead directly to a specific ideological reading.

*Against
universality*

This, however, does not undermine the feminist approach since it does not, as we said, pretend to design a general and universally valid framework. Precisely because feminist narratology is interested in the ever-changing context and the constantly renewed construction

of the difference between men and women, it rejects every unchanging macrotheory.⁴²⁹ Nancy Miller says that feminist textual criticism believes in a “poetics of location”: she realizes that every text—literary or theoretical—is located in a specific context.⁴³⁰

This qualification, made by feminist narratologists themselves, is best kept in mind when reading actual narrative analyses. Especially in the early stages, feminist narrative analyses seem to deal with the “typically female” and the “typically male” in an oversimplified and universalizing manner, but in light of this qualification, such assertions acquire their contextualized value. Teresa de Lauretis emphasizes that feminist literary theory does not work with an essentialist conception of Woman.⁴³¹ In Mária Brewer’s words, “Women’s discourse has little to do with an ineffable or unnamable essence of Femininity.”⁴³² There is no essentially female narrative form either. If Lanser argues that, historically speaking, female writers use narrative forms that are less oriented toward the public domain than the forms used by men, she does not attempt a universal law or a reification of female writing. She tries rather to connect this writing with the specific eighteenth-century context in which letters and diaries were seen as female genres, while speeches and novels were seen as male ones.⁴³³ More than once Lanser warns the reader that she does not propose a real, authentic, and essentially female way of writing and reading.⁴³⁴

Since this handbook focuses on the relevance of theory for narrative analysis, we will not dwell upon the wider contextual dimensions of feminist theory. Instead we restrict ourselves to the relevance of gender for narrative form and content. As a pragmatic approach to the text, feminist research has concentrated on the sender of the text (the author), the message (the narrative form), and the receiver (the reader). In all these domains it pays attention to aspects that have mostly been ignored in the structuralist approach and that here assume the status of leitmotifs: experience and desire; the struggle for authority; ambiguity; the corporeal.

The most striking pattern in feminist analyses is probably the combination of resistance and complexity. Female authors, narrative strategies, and readers are often represented as critical actors in the struggle against an existing male tradition. In this struggle women often use the “male” weapons and transform them. This move makes not only

*Ambiguity
and struggle*

these weapons ambiguous—for example, the traditional narrator—but the female fighters as well. They are supposed to absorb as well as transform the male counterpart. In simple terms this pattern comes down to, first, the assertion of an opposition (man versus woman) and, second, the conflation of the opposite extremes in one of the poles—that is, the female one. Many feminist analyses associate the male pole with unequivocality: well-delineated traditions, pursuits, and identities. The female pole, on the contrary, is characterized by ambiguity: vague traditions, camouflaged (because of repression) pursuits, transgressive identities. This association of “female” with “ambiguous” is often already advertised in the titles of such works, one example being that of the reader *Ambiguous Discourse*, edited by Kathy Mezei. In recent years this ambiguity seems to have spread across the gender spectrum, underscoring once more that there is no essential femininity.⁴³⁵

Gender and
author

With *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar published an early and influential study on female authors in the nineteenth century. Their analysis clearly features the mechanism of struggle and ambiguity. The writers in question are supposed to be united by a common struggle against the male establishment, “a common, female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinitions of self, art, and society.”⁴³⁶ At the level of the author, this struggle amounts to a clash with the paternalistic tradition, which (etymologically as well) identifies the author with the paterfamilias, a human version of God, our father. This tradition functions as an order: the woman is presented with a mirror in which she has to recognize herself. She has to subject herself to the image man has made for her: that of the subjected angel who puts her creativity at the service of man and, more specifically, at the service of his procreation. A woman who resists this is a monster. She displays male traits such as assertiveness and aggression. The female author is such a monster: a sick hybrid, a she-man, not dissimilar to the postmodern monster we will discuss later in this chapter.

For the female author this ambiguous status is a struggle between experience and tradition. The male narrative tradition never lends a voice to the female experience except through the male stereotypes of angel and monster. A woman who wants to write must come to the conclusion that there are no prestigious narrative forms or genres

in which she can express her subjective experience. She may occupy herself with marginal genres such as children's books and fairy tales but not with real literary work—the novel. If she wants to write novels anyway, she will do this out of the “anxiety of authorship”—the female version of Harold Bloom's “anxiety of influence.”⁴³⁷ A man who wants to become a writer fears and transforms his great models and influences. He struggles with certain authors. A woman who wants to write struggles with authorship itself, with the literary creativity that, according to tradition, she does not possess and must not appropriate.

The female author's solution for this fear lies in all kinds of ambiguous strategies such as irony, parody, self-mockery, name change (George Eliot and George Sand are the most famous examples), hidden meanings, and secret messages. Gilbert and Gubar underscore “the duplicity that is essential” to the literary strategies they describe.⁴³⁸ Male literary conventions are used and abused to express the female experience by means of various detours. Behind apparent docility, anger smolders; behind the application of convention, sabotage lurks. The angel hides a monster. And the many female characters who have supposedly gone astray in the novels of authors like Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot are bitter parodies of man's image of women who did not subject themselves to the stereotypes. According to Gilbert and Gubar, these madwomen are the literary doubles of the female author: “By projecting their rebellious impulses not into their heroines but into mad or monstrous women [. . .] female authors dramatize their own self-division, their desire both to accept the structures of patriarchal society and to reject them. [The madwoman] is usually in some sense the *author's* double, an image of her own anxiety and rage.”⁴³⁹

Today feminist narratology still includes the author in its textual analyses of characters and narrators: “‘Who is speaking?’ refers not just to the narrator(s) but also to the author. [. . .] Therefore the identity, experience, and socio-cultural-historical circumstances of the author [. . .] are important in understanding the ways that narrative participates in the politics of gender.”⁴⁴⁰ In traditional literary theory this direct link between textual figures and real persons is rejected as a kind of naïveté, a confusion of fiction and reality, a misjudgment and reduction of literariness. Feminist narratology, on the other hand, embraces this so-called referentialism and anthropomorphism. It looks

*Humankind
and reality*

in the text for references to social reality and the author's subjective experience, unlike the structuralists, who considered the text to be an independently functioning system of signs. The emphasis on the personality of the authors distinguishes feminist narratology from the poststructuralist approach as well, which proclaims the death of the author and the impersonality of the literary text.⁴⁴¹ Feminist narratology shares its anthropomorphism with narrative ethics, which also pays considerable attention to the human agents of literary communication (the writer and the reader) and the anthropomorphic aspects of the literary text. As we observed in the discussion of narrative ethics, this is not surprising for an ideological approach.

In this connection Lanser talks about the text as "mimesis" instead of "semiosis."⁴⁴² "Mimesis" is here assumed to have a much broader meaning than in traditional literary theory and narratology. Lanser wants to avoid "mimeticist traps" by refusing to reduce characters to real persons. This is necessary "to inhibit the more imitative and uncritical investments in literary character."⁴⁴³ At the same time, however, Lanser wants to get away from formalist approaches that refuse to connect form with reference. Traditionally, mimesis refers to a textual procedure, but in feminist narratology it becomes a political strategy, an attempt to assume the authority of traditional narrative art by imitating and manipulating it. This ambiguous appropriation of tradition is a form of mimicry, described by Luce Irigaray as a disrespectful imitation or playful repetition and generalized by Tania Modleski as "a time-honored tactic among oppressed groups, who often appear to acquiesce in the oppressor's ideas about it, thus producing a double meaning: the same language or act simultaneously confirms the oppressor's stereotypes of the oppressed and offers a dissenting and empowering view for those in the know."⁴⁴⁴ To the extent that mimesis is traditionally seen as a kind of reflection, this vision ties in perfectly with Gilbert and Gubar's ideas, which imply that the female author needs to pass through the looking glass that reflects the male stereotypes.⁴⁴⁵

*Gender and
reader*

The female reader encounters a kind of mimicry, struggle, and ambiguity similar to that of the female author. Modleski rejects theories of the reader that conceive of feminist interpretations as a complement to existing male literature rather than as a critique of this literature. According to her, there is a desire for power in this critique. This de-

sire may imitate the existing reading strategies, but it also transforms them, notably by connecting them to the female experience. While this experience is no more than a hypothesis for the male reading tradition, it is a compelling point of departure for feminist readings. Once more, the combination of the male hermeneutic tradition with the female experience leads to ambiguity in the sense that this reading implies both identification and rejection. The singularity of the female reading lies precisely in this ambiguity, and this is where the female reader seizes power. The interpretation of a text is an attempt to gain power over the text. Tradition would like such a reading to be unequivocal; a feminist reading, on the contrary, sees the recognition of ambiguity as a recognition of the female position and therefore also as a form of "female empowerment."⁴⁴⁶

The double nature of female readings is itself redoubled by the difference between male and female texts. The male canon distorts the female experience and at best makes that experience tangible for the female reader through the distortion. Such texts evoke a negative and a positive reading: it is negative to the extent that the reading resists male distortion; it is positive to the extent that resistance functions as a means of accessing authentic experience. In this connection Patrocinio Schweickart talks about "a dual hermeneutic."⁴⁴⁷ The point of reading female texts is not resistance but rather embracement, an empathic reading with three crucial characteristics. First, the reader is a sympathetic witness, "a witness in defense of the woman writer"; second, readers connect the text with the context in which it came into existence; and third, readers recognize their own subjectivity as the inevitable road to the so-called objectivity of the text.⁴⁴⁸ With a feminist reader, a male text triggers resistance: she wants to control that text; a female text, on the contrary, triggers "intersubjective communication" in which the reader fuses with the subjectivity of the author, the text, and the context, which are all colored by gender. The male model of distance is in opposition to the female model of dialogue, "the dialogic model of reading."⁴⁴⁹

These generalizations about abstract readers are a far cry from traditional speculations about genderless readers. However, as Robyn Warhol claims, it is in "attending to the actual reader" that "feminist narrative theory takes its biggest step away from its structuralist ori-

gins. [. . .] Unlike classical narratology, feminist narratology is free to draw on what can be known about actual readers to speculate about the impact of reading Austen novels upon individuals and, more importantly, upon the culture.”⁴⁵⁰ Digital humanities may help in studying sets of empirical data concerning real-life readers gathered from blogs, databases, and internet forums. In that way present-day feminist narratology may realize its empirical and inductive vocation.

One step in that direction has been taken by Ruth Page, who investigates “the response of real readers as they interact with an experimental form of digital storytelling: a multi-stranded narrative presented in hypertext.”⁴⁵¹ The text she uses is “an amateur piece of writing by Charles Sundt called *Fishnet*.”⁴⁵² Like all her other empirical studies, this one refutes the dual opposition between male and female. The similarities between “male” and “female” reading dwarf the differences. In addition, the variations can never be explained in terms of gender alone but should be linked to a host of contextual variables, such as education and interest. That is why Page stresses the importance “of avoiding an abstract, binary model of gender when examining the readers’ responses.”⁴⁵³

Gender and
character

The feminist reading model pays much attention to character as a carrier of gender ideology. Not only the image of a male or a female character comes under scrutiny but also the narrative techniques used in character presentation. Again, feminism, by looking at the textual devices used to depict characters, tries to avoid mimeticist reductions. “As part of my practice of feminist narratology,” Warhol notes, “I try to encounter characters in all their facets as functions of discourse, not as mirrors of or windows on the extradiegetic world. Characters, then, are creatures of the discourse of gender” used in the novel.⁴⁵⁴ An early example of such a discursive and feminist reading is *The Heroine’s Text*, in which Nancy Miller analyzes the female characters in eighteenth-century English and French novels. She combines a structuralist focus on the narrative sequence with a feminist interest in the female life story. In the novels she studies, the narrative sequence is driven by the “logic of the faux pas”: the life of a woman is an insecure road that may lead to disaster by a single wrong choice.⁴⁵⁵ Woman, therefore, is an extremely vulnerable creature, and this vulnerability has to do with her sexual desires.

Two fundamental narrative developments are possible: the euphoric one, which leads to the integration of woman in society, and the dysphoric one, which leads to disaster.

Novels from the Enlightenment often choose the epistolary form. According to Miller, the rhetoric a man uses in his letters is a form of double play. On the one hand a man wants to seduce his female addressee, which appeals to the woman's so-called dangerous sexual desires. On the other hand he wants to subject her to the patriarchal order, which makes female desire subordinate to domestic peace. The narrative is shaped by the woman's wavering reactions to the man's paradoxical strategy. The ending—positive or negative—must remove the doubt.

A similar story of uncertainty and relief can be found in many biblical stories about women. In *Lethal Love*, Mieke Bal aims to compensate for the absence of the subject in Genettean narratology.⁴⁵⁶ She does this by studying how biblical stories construe the female subject. She calls this construction a collocation, an idiomatic connection between body and morality. In the stories the woman's body is staged as impure and imperfect. It signifies a lack. This is immediately interpreted as a moral danger.⁴⁵⁷ Bal emphasizes that the Bible is not a purely patriarchal text and that it does not simply set male omnipotence against female subordination. The male subject is often insecure and powerless. What is more, it is precisely this uncertainty that is externalized and incorporated in the narrative construction of woman. In the story of Adam and Eve in the Creation, assigning to the woman the position of the mother ultimately counteracts the woman's impurity and the man's uncertainty. This position domesticates the body, integrates woman into a process of education, and alleviates man's uncertainty. It is a position that is sealed in Eve's name, "a name that means, as her mate says, 'the mother of all living.'"⁴⁵⁸

The confrontation of male stereotypes and female subjects is an ever-present theme in feminist character studies. In the already mentioned monograph *Engendering the Subject*, Sally Robinson shows that the work of Doris Lessing, Angela Carter, and Gayl Jones stages women who do not at all correspond to the classical pattern and who also cannot be reduced to a simple reversal or rejection of that pattern. These authors produce complex, often contradictory images undermining the dominant image of women. By means of all kinds of narrative strate-

gies, these texts resist the homogenizing images of Woman that dominate a certain culture at a certain time.

*Gender and
narration*

Gender studies of the narrator are also characterized by ambiguity and conflict. According to Susan Lanser, the female voice is polyphonic. At one level it seems to conform to male rhetoric; at another level it undermines it. Just as in the work of narrative ethicists such as Phelan, Korthals Altes, and Newton, Lanser refers to Bakhtin's polyphony. What was considered to be a general characteristic of the literary text is now seen as a typically female characteristic. Lanser argues that "polyphony is more pronounced and more consequential in women's narratives and in the narratives of other dominated peoples."⁴⁵⁹ The female voice hovers between subordination and authority, between private and public. For instance, in *Persuasion*, Jane Austen uses heterodiegetic narration combined with internal focalization, which at first looks like a very traditional, heteronormative form. However, through irony and suggestive phrasing, the narratorial voice's traditional authority is undermined; it becomes ambiguous, and this "double-voicing" ridicules the male character and narration without explicitly saying so: "Austen's narrator takes the patriarch down without uttering a single word against him."⁴⁶⁰ The undecidability and ambiguity of the literary text, which is underscored in many postclassical approaches as a characteristic of literature at large, is interpreted here as a characteristic of femininity—which may be employed by male narrators.⁴⁶¹

Authority

These narrative strategies fit in the power struggle inherent in the conflict on which feminist narratology wants to focus. Lanser considers every narration to be "a quest for discursive authority," and obviously this quest is ambiguous: on the one hand the struggle for power is a male desire, while on the other hand it attempts to overthrow male dominance.⁴⁶² This attempt is realized by exposing the traditional male rhetorical techniques that lend power to the speaker. According to Lanser, this is why female narrators often demonstrate a high degree of self-awareness. In other theories this self-awareness is seen as a general characteristic of literariness (fiction is supposedly always a form of metafiction); in feminist theories it is considered a sign of female narration. The fictionality of male authority is exposed, and in this way female narration tries to gain its own authority.⁴⁶³

Starting from this ambiguous attempt to lend authority to narration, Lanser discusses three fundamental forms of narration. First, there is the *authorial voice*, which is mostly heterodiegetic, extradiegetic, self-conscious, and oriented toward the public realm. This is the cliché of the male narrator. Often his sex is not indicated explicitly, but the reader simply supposes the narrator is a man. The appropriation of this position by a female narrator has important consequences. Readers may feel so disappointed by their unmet expectations that they consider the female narrator to be unreliable.⁴⁶⁴ Once again, unreliability does not derive from the text itself (and certainly not from a correspondence with such a problematic concept as the implied author) but rather from the reader's expectation patterns. It turns out that gender plays a fundamental role in these patterns.

The *personal voice* is the second kind of narrator that Lanser studies from the gender angle. It refers to all forms of autodiegetic narration. Since it is personal, the reader often considers it to be less objective and more intimate or private. Moreover, if the voice belongs to a woman, it is easily seen as indiscreet—a transgression of the law saying that women have to remain silent on subjects men can talk about without hesitation or castigation.⁴⁶⁵ The mere transgression of the silence imperative may lend authority to the female voice here. Moreover, the image of women in this personal narration may clash with the dominant images. Finally, this narration can clarify which gender-related presuppositions constitute the basis of the belief that these personal narratives—certainly in the case of women—are small-scale, subjective reports without any general validity. Such a self-conscious exposure of conventions may transform them into weapons in the struggle for authority.

Finally, there is the *communal voice*, which Lanser thinks is typical of marginal and repressed groups and “therefore” of women.⁴⁶⁶ There is no structuralist definition of this type of narration. Lanser uses the term to refer to “a practice in which narrative authority is invested in a definable community and textually inscribed either through multiple, mutually authorizing voices or through the voice of a single individual who is manifestly authorized by a community.”⁴⁶⁷ Precisely because of the female and communal aspect, this narrative strategy is the

most natural form of resistance against the male and individual authorial mode of narration. It contributes to the construction of “a female body politic.”⁴⁶⁸ This amounts to the feminist politics of the collective that opposes the male politics of the individual.

In all instances the female voice attempts to tell its narrative without submission to the male tradition of telling. Warhol quotes Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, in which the main character, Anne Elliot, refuses to accept the traditional form of narration: “If you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.”⁴⁶⁹

Gender and
narratee

The collective is often associated with the female and confronted by the individual, which is supposed to be more male. Robyn Warhol shows in *Gendered Interventions* that at the level of the narratee as well, the female narrative strategy is more oriented toward the realization of togetherness and collectivity than the male voice is.⁴⁷⁰ In that study of the Victorian novel, Warhol concentrates on the passages in which the narratee is addressed directly. In these passages male authors (William Thackeray, Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope) try to get readers to distance themselves from the events, while female authors (George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Beecher Stowe) attempt to get readers involved in the events. Warhol realizes that readers can always distance themselves from suggestions addressed to the narratee, but in any case her evidence quite convincingly shows that female authors writing in English in the middle of the nineteenth century are more didactic than their male colleagues. They aspire to change the world more than their colleagues. It is clear from George Eliot’s essays that she saw a didactic disposition as an intrinsic part of her program of realism, which obviously corroborates Warhol’s hypothesis.⁴⁷¹

Cross-dressing

Warhol easily accommodates counterexamples as expressions of cross-dressing: male ideologies are disguised as female narrative strategies and vice versa.⁴⁷² At first this interpretation may seem to link up with queer theory, but on closer inspection one could see this as the reproduction of cultural stereotypes. Warhol’s explanation does not fully account for the possibility that the canonization of the texts in her corpus is the consequence of a socially constructed concept of femininity that gives priority to care and affection. According to Warhol,

these are the values that the female Victorian authors wanted to convey to their readers. However, these values, as well as Warhol's view itself, are not neutral: they are themselves dependent on a social conception of "femininity" and on a specific canonization process that has decided who the so-called representative Victorian writers are. Warhol's corpus is probably too small to justify the generalizations she makes. Nevertheless, her book is a creative attempt to relate the influence of gender to a narratological interpretation grounded in historical knowledge.

According to feminist narratology, the use of genre conventions is colored by gender as well. Female authors, narrators, and characters sometimes take advantage of those genre patterns to claim authority conventionally associated with them. By doing this, they not only undermine the male authority that is traditionally attached to certain genres; they also reform the genre conventions. Sally Robinson interprets Doris Lessing's four Martha Quest novels as a female manipulation of the male ideal of self-realization described in the bildungsroman. Lessing seems to choose the traditional bildungsroman, a genre reflecting the "male" goal-oriented system, in which elements such as progress, career, and reputation are central. In the beginning of the tetralogy it looks as if Martha is after this form of so-called self-realization. But she clashes with the system, and thus her classical quest fails. Her story progressively deviates from the male values that are inherent in the genre. Instead of efficiency, Martha discovers an "absence of movement."⁴⁷³ Thanks to this absence, she arrives at a critical conclusion about her ambiguous situation. As a white colonial woman in Central Africa before and after World War II, she is, on the one hand, part of the "male" system in which *Bildung* is defined as civilization and progress. On the other hand, she comes to realize that this so-called improvement is an illusion.

*Gender and
genre*

From an intersectional angle, Susan Stanford Friedman has deepened and widened the study of race, gender, and genre by adding religion and postcolonialism to the mix in an analysis of three "diasporic, Muslim *Bildungsromane*."⁴⁷⁴ She lists "ten key dimensions of religious formations,"⁴⁷⁵ taking into account "theological, cultural, and institutional" aspects.⁴⁷⁶ Friedman demonstrates how the novels under scrutiny undermine both the classic female bildungsroman and the ste-

reotypical combination of religion with gender oppression. Moreover, religion here plays a crucial role in the plot, as “religion can function as a causal component of narrative becoming, not solely as a restrictive axis of power. Taken together, they demonstrate how *Bildung* plots integrate the complex, often contradictory components of identity into narratives of becoming, how intersectional identities (individual and plural) generate patterns of mobility and resolution that are variously teleological or open-ended.”⁴⁷⁷

Gender and plot

The development of a personality is only one of the many potential plots in a narrative text. Nevertheless, considering the goal-oriented evolution, the self-expansion, and the desire to dominate the environment, this development of personality can function as a typical example of what traditional narratology calls a plot. According to Mária Brewer, these traditional plot definitions are strongly informed by male desire that is oriented toward separate, individual development and dominance and that is mostly expressed in stories full of adventures, undertakings, and projects.⁴⁷⁸ From that perspective many female stories seem hardly to have a plot at all. Supposedly they are static contemplations or descriptions of lives in which nothing happens. Feminist narratology counters this allegation by saying that the narration itself is the plot. That is where the adventure and desire hide. Communication not only provides the form but also the content, the plot of the narration.⁴⁷⁹ Only from a male, androcentric perspective can these texts be discarded as being “plotless” or as having a “weak plot.”

Often this seeming weakness undermines the male idea of narrativity and tellability. Jane Austen’s plots typically cover only a few months of the heroine’s life, “from the point in her life when she is eligible for marriage to the event of her wedding.”⁴⁸⁰ The pattern of the plot “follows a feminine inversion of the ancient ‘boy meets girl’ romance plot: girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl and boy are united in the end.” The tension of the narrative does not reside in unexpected turns or surprising ends but in the detailed telling itself, which gives the reader the impression that he or she is witnessing something that actually happened: “Given the predictability of the outlines of Austen’s plots, the interest is of course all in the details, the subtle renditions of conversations and situations adding up to the powerful illusion that these figures are people.”⁴⁸¹

Ruth Page locates the identification of “female plots” and “weak narrativity” within the canonization process. The canon has a preference for male texts and plots.⁴⁸² At the same time, she indicates that other factors apart from gender come into play, that female authors can unfold well-designed plots as well, and that male narrations can just as frequently be plotless. According to her, a binary opposition between male and female plots is untenable. From an empirical study of oral narratives on childbirth, she concludes that the similarities between male and female narratives far outweigh the differences and that the initial feminist pairing of “male” with “plot” and of “female” with “plotless” is untenable: “Explaining linguistic differences in terms of gendered behaviour is not only reactionary in so far as it reinforces essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity, its explanatory power is also limited and overlooks the significance of the macro-level similarity between the narratives: that both women and men construct their experiences as a series of linked Anecdotes rather than as more conventional, plot-driven stories. At a basic level, the corollary of this is that a mutually exclusive categorization of storytelling style according to the gender of the speaker is simply untenable.”⁴⁸³

The interpretation of the plot as a form of desire is only one of the many ways in which feminist narratology imports that desire into theory. Writing, storytelling, and reading cannot be separated from the many shapes of desire, such as the desire for communication, understanding, and authority. Lanser explicitly interprets the introduction of desire as a critique of the so-called rational and scientific approach of structuralism. Desire is variable and therefore goes against the classical quest for fixed and universal categories. Desire is impure; it does not care for neat structuralist classifications. And desire is ungraspable; it cannot be reduced to what theory can tell us about it.⁴⁸⁴

*Gender and
desire*

Nevertheless, feminist narratology attempts to introduce desire into theory. Early on Teresa de Lauretis contributed to this effort with her essay “Desire in Narrative.”⁴⁸⁵ She reproaches the structuralists for treating narration exclusively as a product, an entity, and not as a process, a movement. As a product, a narrative text is reduced to a system of building blocks such as narration and focalization. Viewed as a process, a narrative text is a development through which a subject tries to design itself. This subject is not an abstract category such as the sub-

ject role in Greimas's actantial model but an actual person anchored in both a historical and a psychological context. In this context gender plays a crucial role. On the one hand the story is the expression of a desire that is strongly inspired by gender; on the other hand the story precisely produces that desire. In this sense the desiring subject is created by the stories it creates. It is "a subject engendered, we might say, precisely by the process of its engagement in the narrative genres."⁴⁸⁶

Desire's dynamic is realized through narrative development, which often consists of some sort of quest. De Lauretis analyzes different structuralist approaches to narrative development—in, for instance, the work of Vladimir Propp, Yuri Lotman, and René Girard—and connects this with the Freudian view on subjective development, which also contains narrative elements. According to Freud, the child develops into an adult in a sequence of phases in which the oedipal conflict marks the fundamental transition. De Lauretis argues that Oedipus as a mythical figure is exemplary of narrative heroes: he wants to know and to reign. Woman simultaneously appears as an obstacle (the Sphinx's riddle puts Oedipus to the test) and an object (Oedipus wants to possess the Sphinx's knowledge and ultimately desires his mother). Woman is a necessary detour, a phase of transition as part of a boy's transformation into a man. The hero in fiction and the child in psychoanalysis share the male desire to transgress the boundary, to occupy and dominate woman's space.

*Desire and
difference*

Since the oedipal vicissitudes are "paradigmatic to all narratives,"⁴⁸⁷ narrative developments have to be associated with the conflict between, on the one hand, the male hero as the active subject and, on the other hand, the female obstacle as the passive object. Narratives are endless movements between these two poles. They create the differences, bridge them, and reproduce them. Therefore, "the work of narrative [. . .] is a mapping of differences, and specifically, first and foremost, of sexual difference into each text."⁴⁸⁸ The desire to tell, live, and read stories must be seen from the perspective of this mapping of differences. Stories tempt the reader to identify with the subject, a man. For the female reader this temptation leads to an ambiguous identification, on the one hand with male desire and on the other hand with its female counterpart. This "double identification" is an example of the typical form of reasoning we have already encountered a number of times in

feminist narratology.⁴⁸⁹ In this pattern of reasoning an opposition is set up between man and woman and then woman is shown to harbor this opposition in herself, which means that she is ambiguous.

To the extent that the double identification involves an identification with male desire, woman subjects herself to that male narrative template. In this way she can desire to be desired in the masculine way. But to the extent that she combines this with the female position of object and obstacle, she undermines the male position of subject and aspiring agent. This ambiguity too we have repeatedly noted in feminist discussions of narrative forms: on the one hand there is complicity and subordination, while on the other hand there is resistance and undermining. According to De Lauretis, narratology should not resolve this ambiguity nor ignore it but simply map it.

In narrative texts this “mapping” occurs through language that translates desire and the body. Oedipal narratives give both of them an ideological form. They point to locations of desire, erogenous zones, or danger zones—the gaze, for instance, which can kill the hero, as the myth of Medusa shows. Only by means of this translation does the female body seem to be truly defined. It seems as if only now it receives its essence. “That internal condition, the essence of femininity, is then a product of discourse,” a discourse that is propelled by “male pleasure.”⁴⁹⁰ Here as well, woman is seduced; she is invited to adopt and stage that discourse—literally, to embody it. The narrative expression of the body is one of the most obvious program points for a feminist narratology. As De Lauretis militantly puts it, “The stakes, for women, are rooted in the body.” Not only is the body the seat of desire and sexual difference, it is also “the supreme object of representation for the visual arts, the medical sciences, the capitalist media industry.”⁴⁹¹

*Desire,
language,
and body*

Traditional narrative language offers a representation of the body that does not fit the female experience. She is forced to look for a language of her own. Many feminist studies call this language “performative” because it does not translate a given identity but instead produces a subjectivity that is never entirely finished or fixed.⁴⁹² This *écriture féminine*, a term canonized by Hélène Cixous, is supposed to give to the female body a voice that counteracts the male language of abstraction and subordination of that body.⁴⁹³

The traditional (psychoanalytical) view sees language as a process

that installs boundaries and thereby divides and organizes the body. Only in this way does a human being receive an identity. A child supposedly lives in a boundless symbiosis with the environment; thanks to language, this symbiosis is replaced by a well-delineated identity. *Écriture féminine* rejects this dichotomy and evolution: it wants to be a language of transgression and corporeality, a language in which identity is not fixed but in which it is always being sought. This quest is the movement of desire that never stops. In that sense the feminist subject is nomadic and escapes the conventional male categorization.⁴⁹⁴ The same holds for the body, which must not be trapped in definitions.

The language of narratology—and more generally of literary criticism—has to integrate this dynamic corporeality and subjectivity, and therefore it has to distance itself from the rigid, impersonal, and abstract discourse of structuralists and poststructuralists. In Nancy Miller's words, the theory has to find a way "to reembody the author."⁴⁹⁵ This theoretical attention to the corporeal must not lead to a new version of the traditional discourse that aims to master and subject everything. On the contrary, it must demonstrate its own dependence on the context in which it came into existence—including its preferences, predecessors, and backgrounds. For narratologists this means that they have to take their own stories into account. In this connection, Rosi Braidotti says, "I want to practice a set of narrations of my own embodied genealogy."⁴⁹⁶ Feminist analysis is, according to Miller, localized; it is positioned in and by the context but refuses to settle down. This makes a general theory undesirable, which brings us back to the start of our discussion of feminist narratology.

*Feminism
and affect*

With the topics of language and body, we have entered a research field that in recent years seems to have supplemented the Freudian logic of desire, although it is linked to poststructuralist versions of psychoanalysis, namely the field of affect theory.⁴⁹⁷ It is closely associated with queer theory through, for instance, the influential studies of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Lauren Berlant.⁴⁹⁸ The term "affect" is defined in many different ways, but that may reflect its nature, as it is said to precede language, awareness, meaning, and intention. In those respects "affect" differs from "emotion" and "feeling." The way affect is evoked and constructed by language is, not surprisingly, closely allied with the construction and performance of gender.

The so-called “affective turn” has left its traces in narratology,⁴⁹⁹ not just in feminist theory but also in cognitive studies, as we have explained when dealing with 4E cognition.⁵⁰⁰ As to feminism, Warhol’s study *Having a Good Cry* followed Sedgwick in her plea against a “paranoid” or “symptomatic” reading, characterized by distance and distrust as strategies to lay bare the so-called hidden and deeper meanings of a text. Warhol and Sedgwick advocate a “reparative reading,” based on empathy and pleasure.⁵⁰¹

Mutsaers’s story ties in with a number of the feminist points of attention discussed above. For one, there is the female protagonist, who is indeed characterized by resistance and ambiguity. The girl resists the authoritarian riding master, but she wants power herself, more specifically, the power to fly. The character of the riding master too is more ambiguous than a first reading would suggest. At first the authoritarian behavior of the riding master evokes the old-fashioned image of man repressing woman. This image is strengthened by one of the meanings of the Dutch word for “riding master,” which is *pikeur*, a “womanizer.” In any case the riding master is an authoritarian figure who wants the girl to wear real riding breeches, but this particular pupil has her own thoughts concerning this rather resolutely expressed wish.

*Feminism and
Mutsaers*

However, this sketch of the situation does not take into account the fact that the riding instructor may be a woman. This character is never referred to as “he.” In Dutch it is current practice to use the masculine word for an official in function even if it refers to a woman, and perhaps the narrator of this text follows this practice. There might not even be a feminine word in this case, because *pikeuse* does not seem to be correct Dutch. If the riding master is female, her words about the heavenly sensation that little girls have not yet experienced suggest that she is an adult who *has* had that experience. The fact that it is possible to see the riding master as a woman has another important consequence. It unmask the “spontaneous” presupposition that the riding master has to be a man and thereby exposes the projection of an outdated prejudice, an idea about the hierarchy—evoked by Mutsaers in the shape of the whip—in the relationship between man and woman. This reading is not far-fetched for a text in which the wearing of certain trousers is a central motif. In Dutch *de broek dragen* (“to wear the pants”) is said of a woman who is in control of her husband.

Moreover, we must not forget that at the end of the text the girl “understands” why it is better to wear real riding breeches. The fact that the riding master’s sex cannot be determined conclusively enables at least two readings of this ending. In the conventional interpretation, in which the riding master is a man, his words turn out to be correct, and this appears to confirm or even strengthen his position of power. However, when the reference to “wearing the pants” is picked up, a reading in which Mutsaers at the same time undermines this power becomes possible as well. In the less straightforward interpretation in which the riding master is a woman, she may establish her authority only to show the girl the pleasure of the real riding breeches. This pleasure may even be taken as a metaphor for power in relation to men. In this context, riding the horse while wearing the right pants, together with the “wings” this gives to the rider, may even invite an erotic reading: the woman “mounts” the man and reaches an orgasm in this dominant position. This may be a little fanciful, but characterization and focalization do invite the reader to interpret this story in a feminist-narratological way. The acceptance of this invitation turns “Pegasian” into a text on sex and power and especially on the conventional images evoked by the interplay of these themes.

This feminist reading puts character and themes into perspective, and the ambiguous narration and representation of consciousness also tie in with the polyphonous female narration as characterized by Susan Lanser. This relates not only to the use of free indirect speech, which sometimes makes it impossible to distinguish the narrator’s voice from that of the character’s. There is also the girl’s voice, which as an ironic echo transforms the riding master’s words into questions. Literally as well as metaphorically, this transformation calls into question the discourse of authority. This questioning continues until the last lines of the story. The question “Is it the idea or is it the sensation?” is followed by a new question, this time without a question mark: “Whatever.” The absence of the question mark suggests that this “response-question” is the conclusion: one shouldn’t look for unequivocal answers to questions. Questions *are* answers. The answer to the story’s uncertainty—is it discipline or a game, an idea or sensation?—lies in the acceptance of that uncertainty. And it is precisely this acceptance that leads to transgression and thus to taking off. This is the girl’s desire as well as

the riding master's, a desire that constitutes a bridge not only between the characters but also between opposites such as discipline and game, or idea and feeling.

"The Map" also deals with a female character and authority. Mrs. Paalman from the bookshop wears the pants. Her name seems to carry a double sign of her manliness: *paal* (pole) can easily be regarded as a phallic symbol, and "man" is simply part of her name. That she is in control at home is suggested ironically by describing the bookstore as a living room: "It wasn't any bigger than a large living room." This transfers the traditional male traits to the woman, but apparently it does not imply an undermining of the existing stereotypes in the rest of the fictional world. The village (or the customer) accepts that literary preferences strongly depend on the sex of the reader. People ask for "a light novel for a girl of seventeen."

*Feminism
and Krol*

The village seems to cherish other ideological stereotypes as well. The Christian ideology turns Sundays into days of rest. The shop is closed and shuttered: "Closed off from the world." The first-person narrator is nonetheless allowed to look at a map and thus violates the stereotypical closed-off world. It calls on him to "bike" all places on the map. This desire is much more individualistic and much more aimed at mastery than Mutsaers's Pegasian desire, which builds bridges. "What excited me was the thought that it now made sense *to have been everywhere*. The prospect I was going to cover the earth with my body. To be everywhere . . ." The self does not break free from the earth as in Mutsaers's story, but it covers the earth, subjects it. The body becomes an instrument of power to conquer the earth by biking.

As soon as this conquest has taken place and everything has been mapped, the map is "meaningless" to the narrator. His desire has been satisfied and disappears. This stands in sharp contrast to the desire of Mutsaers's girl, who does not disappear in her flight but instead lives on. With some hesitation one could see the individualistic, goal-oriented, and finite desire of Krol's first-person narrator as an illustration of so-called male desire, while the transgressive and infinite desire of Mutsaers's girl could be called feminine.

Focalization and narration could be connected to these two types of desire. In Krol's text the story is told in retrospect. Just like the desire it features, the narrated period is definitively over. There is a distance

in time between the narrator and the boy, which by itself suggests that the narrator has distanced himself from infantile desire. Mutsaers's text features simultaneous narration and eagerly looks forward to the moment when "you take off." There is no distance—not in perception, not in narration, and not with regard to the desire in question. Krol's story may be felt to establish boundaries and breaks, while Mutsaers's story can be seen as building bridges and crossing boundaries.

By way of illustration we have consciously opposed the two stories in a radical manner. This is of course a simplification that runs the risk of making essentialist claims about "male desires" and "female narrative forms." Nevertheless, this reading also demonstrates that gender does play a role, even in stories that do not explicitly deal with relations between men and women. Undoubtedly this role can be described better or more easily in stories that do tackle these relations directly,⁵⁰² but it is hard to claim that the use of a feminist reading has to depend on the importance of gender in the plot. This is not an objective criterion. To a certain extent readers can decide for themselves how important gender is for interpretation, and this decision will inevitably be influenced by the importance readers attach to the gender question *outside* the text. Even in a text that at first seems to have little to do with gender, readers may look for this ideological issue. There is no doubt that they will "discover" a number of things. The ideology found in a text is influenced by the ideology to which a reader adheres outside the text and vice versa: this "external" ideology is also influenced by the act of reading the text. In fact it plays a role only to the extent that it is activated by the text. The reader cannot step out of this hermeneutic circle by saying that literature objectively contains certain gender aspects.

*Feminism
and Wasco*

"City" illustrates the importance of the reader in gender issues. The character, whose name we have not mentioned so far, is called Tuitel. In Dutch this may be a noun, referring to the spout of a kettle, or an adjective, meaning "unstable, wobbly, unsteady." If readers are inclined to use stereotypical gender frames, they may regard this name as an indication of one of the traditional negative traits ascribed to woman, namely her inconstancy rendered famous in Shakespeare's "Frailty, thy name is woman." The title of the book that includes "City" is *Het Tuitel complex* (The Tuitel complex), which may be read as an ironic

undermining of the traditional Oedipus complex. The latter is dominated by male desire, struggle, and purposefulness. The former, as can be seen in Tuitel's aimless wanderings that fill the book, is characterized by the lack of these traits. This may be a further encouragement to the reader to interpret the seemingly plotless and endless travels of Tuitel as a feminine deconstruction of the male travel narrative.

Travelers typically have a clear objective, either serious (e.g., exploration, combat) or light and carefree (e.g., holidays). In the Wasco narrative this kind of purpose is hard to detect. If there is any well-known travel plot evoked by the sequence of panels, it could be the one-day visit to a city. The main character seems to be strolling around the city without a clear route or guide. It remains uncertain whether Tuitel has enjoyed her- or himself or has learned anything by the end of the day. The lack of facial expressions and words makes it impossible to decide on this. The frame of a tourist trip may be suggested, but it is never attested. And as there is no clear end or aim to the wandering, it undermines the idea of *Bildung* popular in these types of narrative.

Plot (aimless wandering) and genre (travel narrative) may thus be read from a gender perspective. However, the most salient narrative element for a gender reading of "City" is probably the main character. Its clothes look like a dress, or like a shirt with a skirt. That would make Tuitel feminine, if it weren't for paratextual indications that say otherwise. The blurb on the back cover of the book talks about "mister Tuitel and his dog Phiwi" (and once more underscores the lack of clear plots, stating that the drawings "build a labyrinth in which we are invited to go astray"). In this way the reader's default option ("a character wearing a dress or a skirt is feminine") is queered, and the character becomes something in between male and female.

In the preface to the book, the author says that he is showing us *his* world but not in the referential, autobiographical sense of the word. He presents us with the world of comics, which is the universe he, as an author, inhabits: "My panels are no longer windows through which you can look at the outer world. They are windows through which you look at a comic strip." This statement of authorial intention may be taken as an antireferential form of poetics, and the gendered reading we have presented can be seen as a refusal to accept authorial intentions at face value. More generally, such a reading is a rejection of the divide

between text and context, narrative and reality, though, as we said, it wants to avoid the trappings of simple mimeticism. This is one of the central difficulties we have encountered in our discussion of feminist narratology: it must link text with context, narrative with reality, and it must avoid reducing the first to the second.

3.3. *Postcolonial Narratology*

In developing a particular politics of narrative form,⁵⁰³ postcolonial narratology mostly probes narrative texts for the issues that postcolonial theory has moved to the center of literary and cultural criticism. In the view of Hanne Birk and Birgit Neumann these issues are identity construction, alterity, and hybridity.⁵⁰⁴ In the catalog offered by Gerald Prince they also include “migrancy [. . .], fragmentation, diversity, power relations.”⁵⁰⁵ As postcolonial narratology connects these themes and motifs with the aspects of form covered in classical and postclassical narratology, it represents a strong example of “ideological critique,” which according to Amy Elias “examines the ways in which subjects both incorporate and resist definitions of life-world and selfhood structured by hegemonic social powers,” in this case with a specific focus on narrative.⁵⁰⁶ As a “critical” narratology, postcolonial narratology is therefore primarily a form of narratological *criticism* that in its ideal form “reveals the political unsaid of both the text and the social conditions that produced it.”⁵⁰⁷

Put more neutrally, postcolonial narratology is a form of “thematic narratology” in the terms used by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik. In this respect it can be aligned with “feminist, queer, ethnic or minority-related” approaches to narrative.⁵⁰⁸ Roy Sommer categorizes postcolonial narratology under the heading of “corpus-based approaches,” which, as we mentioned earlier, he sets in opposition to “process-oriented approaches,” such as rhetorical and cognitive narratology.⁵⁰⁹

*Theory versus
practice*

The fact that postcolonial narratology derives its position in the field of postclassical theories from its themes and corpus may hint at a central problem—the relative lack of unique methods, concepts, and theories. As Sue J. Kim makes clear when considering the state of the discipline, “there has yet been little theoretically and methodologically sustained engagement in the manner of Robyn Warhol and Susan Lanser on the relationship between feminist theory and narratology.”⁵¹⁰

Her explanation points to a resistance on the part of postcolonial critics (and therefore, we might add, perhaps also to a hesitation on the part of theoretically inclined narratologists): “White and Western theorists speak the universal, analytical voice, while the minority text is the single instantiation; the narrative theory is the *langue*, the minority texts merely the *parole*. Postcolonial and/or ethnic studies’ multidisciplinary and ideological, historical readings become extratextual, specific, while the narrative theory is transcendent, universal, and ahistorical.”⁵¹¹ If theory continues to be regarded as a sign of hegemony, then postcolonial narratology may well forever remain “anticipatory, at least in terms of terminological and modular precision.”⁵¹² Still, if the resistance to theory can be overcome, the concerns of postcolonial theory should have a serious impact on narratology at large, perhaps even to the point of “decolonizing” the discipline, as Kim proposes.

Fludernik articulates the fundamental relevance of postcolonial narratology when arguing “that issues of identity and alterity are relevant to all narratives, even though—for thematic and ideological reasons—they seem to be more prominently addressed in postcolonial texts.”⁵¹³ In our ongoing attempt as human beings to perform our social roles, we all tell a variety of stories to define ourselves, and in the process we also define the other. The narrative constructions of identity and alterity, not just by individuals but also by groups and cultures, are two sides of the same coin. Although perhaps in somewhat more sophisticated ways than their everyday counterparts, artistic narratives obviously partake of these constructions, turning them into visible and teachable instances of ideology. Importantly, (cultural) identity and alterity are always temporary products in a never-ending process of construction, which leads not only to a fragmentation of the self but also to a great variety of narrative resources to accomplish the perpetual task of (self-)narration. These general notions evidently take on more weight when considered against the background of the power struggle in the (post)colonial situation, which therefore merits consideration when trying to integrate the notions of identity and alterity into narratology.

Postcolonial theory highlights narrative “othering” as a “reflection of the colonial scenario in which imperial power and knowledge impact on the native population.”⁵¹⁴ According to Birk and Neumann, it

*Narrative
“othering”*

is therefore one of the tasks of postcolonial narratology “to describe narrative strategies that help to construct stereotypical representations of the Other, and also to analyze their function,”⁵¹⁵ and, with a tip of the hat to the work of Frantz Fanon, “to investigate how literary texts stage the interiorisation [by the other] of attributed characteristics [that mark the self as other].”⁵¹⁶

Since postcolonial hybridity is conceived as a positive alternative to the binary oppositions of Western identity construction (Homi K. Bhabha), it also seems imperative “to find out which narratological categories are especially useful to examine the narrative evocation” of such a subversive mix.⁵¹⁷ In another founding contribution (inspired by various linguistic aspects of narration), Marion Gymnich⁵¹⁸ has thus singled out for narratological treatment in postcolonial texts “the linguistic relation between narrators and characters, strategies of incorporating (untranslated) foreign language material into literary texts, the relative status attributed to the different types of language and the respective roles of the narrator and narratee as translator or cultural mediator and as recipient of translated or mediated linguistic and cultural information.”⁵¹⁹

*Prince's
postcolonial
lens*

While the program laid out by Birk and Neumann may sound somewhat activist, it could very well lead to the refinement of narrative theory. Given the special importance of perspective in the postcolonial context, the study of the interaction of various angles in the same text might for instance result in a more detailed description of (in)stability in focalization. This is just one of the possibilities allowed by Prince, who sketches a postcolonial narratology that “would inflect and perhaps enrich” classical and postclassical narratology “by wearing a set of postcolonial lenses to look at narrative.”⁵²⁰

This enhanced narratology is not bound to a corpus of (post)colonial texts, but it seeks to integrate and highlight the potential effects of postcolonial issues on narrative form. Since narratology is focused not only on what all narratives have in common but also on the ways they “differ from one another *qua* narratives,” asking postcolonial questions could strengthen the theory.⁵²¹ Channeling the essay by Gymnich, as well as Fludernik’s early call for links between narratology and postcolonial studies,⁵²² Prince concludes that on the level of

narration “the accentuation [. . .] of characteristics like the linguistic power or the communal representativeness of the narratorial voice would foster the (classificatory) study of texts in terms of the ways they utilize such characteristics.”⁵²³

A wider possible object of study on the level of narration would be the narrator’s entire diegetic situation, which would deserve extra attention in postcolonial narratology “given the hybridities and inconsistencies, tensions, rifts, and shifts in the status, expression, and character of postcolonial entities and their contexts.”⁵²⁴ On the level of the narrated, Prince points for instance to “such postcolonially marked themes and preoccupations as the old, the new, nostalgia and hope, authentic and fake beginnings and ends, or memory, amnesia and an-amnesia” to motivate a further inquiry into the transition from story to narrative with respect to time.⁵²⁵

It will be clear from these examples that Prince, in order to make what he considers a necessary distinction between postcolonial narratology and postcolonial narratological criticism, has produced an ahistorical set of concerns. These concerns can indeed be derived from the entire body of postcolonial theory, but in doing so Prince loses some of the theory’s ideological thrust. He has been taken to task for this by Kim, for whom postcolonialism is not an “option” (witness Prince’s repeated use of the modals “could” and “might” in his presentation of the many possibilities for postcolonial narratology) but a fundamental aspect of the world in which we live.⁵²⁶ Unlike Prince, whom she reproaches for reinforcing the distinction between history and form, Kim wants to get rid of it. According to her, every narratology (even in its most theoretical form as classical narratology) is bound to a specific historical context.⁵²⁷

Roy Sommer also rejects Prince’s contribution as a reductive exercise in structuralist narratology. According to him, postcolonial narratology would be superfluous “if we were only interested in refining existing narratological distinctions without inquiring how the complexities and ambiguities of multicultural and trans-cultural identities are dealt with in narrative fiction.”⁵²⁸ However, for the theory to improve, which is necessary for an academic discipline to develop and flourish, a degree of abstraction will have to take place. In our section

on cultural narratology we will propose an approach to the inclusion of context into theory that may be less burdened by its ideological load than its postcolonial counterpart is.⁵²⁹

“Pegasian” is about the exercise of power. The riding master is supposed to teach the female protagonist how to ride a horse, but it is clear he or she relishes his or her position of superiority in doing so. When the exchange with the girl has slowed the other horses in the carousel, the riding master brings out the whip to enforce his or her will. These elements of the story might well evoke a time-honored scenario in which the colonizer is seen to educate the colonized as part of the system of oppression developed to extract the maximum of benefits from the colony. Providing the natives with good Western skills boosts local efficiency, and imposing the culture of the colonizer in the process constantly rehearses the arrogance needed to buttress power.

This common account chides the oppressor and foregrounds the terrible abuse of the local population. But is it acceptable to let this scenario determine a reading of the Mutsaers story? Since the riding school might be regarded as an environment for (the children of) the rich, the comparison trivializes the situation of those who truly suffered from violent subjugation. Still, if we suspend this pertinent objection for a moment, the colonial scenario may provide perspectives that might be worth pursuing in a reading of “Pegasian.” In our application of feminist narratology to Mutsaers we realized that the riding master could be a woman. When bringing postcolonial concerns to the story, the colonial scenario makes us see that our default race for the condescending riding master is Caucasian. Needless to say, there are other possibilities, and the girl does not have to be white either. Let us consider two of the many permutations.

If the girl were African American and the instructor Caucasian, the story could play out as a relatively simple version of colonial oppression in which the colonized girl at first betrays her ignorance by asking irrelevant questions but eventually “understands” the importance of the riding breeches. In this reading the colonial riding master typically betrays his or her impatience and does not hesitate to resort to the whip to reinstate power. As an instructor, the riding master “others” the girl as an ignoramus who simply ought to listen instead of “shooting off her mouth.” In this way the story turns into a relatively simple

allegory of the colonial scenario, which exposes the psychological aspects of white condescension through a strongly negative characterization of the riding master. Since the girl's "understanding" contains elements of fantasy ("the horse gives those wings to you"), in this reading it certainly does not undermine the colonizer's projection of ignorance.

If the girl were Asian American and the instructor African American, the story could become a study in American race relations, with both protagonists possibly activating their stereotyped images of the other. Do their respective behaviors feed off these images, or do they approach each other with respect? Do they accept the terms of the didactic contract, or do they instead flout the conventions the riding school situation entails? If the instructor is African American, that certainly does not seem to affect his or her use of power. True to the American cliché "black aggression/Asian docility and dedication," the instructor overpowers the girl. However, true to the associated cliché "black failure/Asian success," the Asian American girl might consider herself more intelligent than the riding master, and that might be backed up by the suggestion that she takes a long time accepting her own supposed ignorance. In fact she might ultimately be seen not to accept it at all, since her idea that "the riding breeches give the horse wings, and the horse gives those wings to you" could be construed as a subversive thought, which does not coincide with the instructor's (unmentioned, but probably rational) knowledge about the breeches and perhaps even makes fun of him or her.

What is more important is that even though we present it as the focus of a *possible* interpretation, the mere thought of the clichés above takes this reading into politically suspect territory, since we are two Caucasian academics from Europe who could be thought to further the stereotypes by simply bringing them up, and therefore to turn the people involved into "others." However, given the apparent lack, in this second reading, of a single conclusion in the confrontation between the two races, the point must be that by leaving gaps in the characterization of the protagonists, Mutsaers has created a fictional arena that allows us to put identity and alterity on the interpretive agenda without privileging any particular point of view.

This returns us to the initial objection concerning the connection between the riding school situation and the colonial scenario. The in-

interpretive profit we expect to derive from a postcolonial narrative analysis of “Pegasian” is predicated on this link. Therefore, we must weigh the value of the various new interpretations (and their combination, which sheds even more light on identity and alterity as never-ending constructions) against the reproach that we belittle actual pain by relating it to a fictional situation with little or no discomfort for the main characters.

The preceding pages indicate that we believe it is worthwhile to develop the postcolonial reading(s) of “Pegasian,” not least because they radically analyze the notion of identity construction and its possibly pernicious effects on the other. In other words, we think the potentially “colonizing” nature of the connection between riding school and colonial scenario will be unmasked and contested as a result of the many postcolonial readings it can provoke. Even if in some of the possible interpretations historical victims play the role of the oppressor, as we have just shown in our second reading, these extreme cases allow for a useful dramatization of inequities in the world today.

*Postcolonial
narratology
and Wasco*

Aliens are certainly some of the most widely known embodiments of the other. They are outlandish creatures that shake up normality and threaten what “we” consider our values. Think *Invaders from Mars* (1953 and 1986) as relatively straightforward movie versions of this dualistic story and *Mars Attacks* (1996) as a satirical version of it. Although in “City” the protagonist and his or her dog do not have the monstrous traits that would immediately suggest aggressive intentions on their part, the mere fact that they land in what looks like a spaceship gives them a fundamental difference compared to “us.” How does the story handle this inevitable “othering”? Our answer to this question develops some of our earlier ideas about the story. As they walk through the city, the little stranger and the dog could of course be on a reconnaissance mission in preparation for a later invasion, but their actions, as we have already suggested, are more like those of tourists, who take a genuine interest in the new environment, point to something they notice (the bird in panel six), enjoy art (panels twelve and thirteen), stop to relish a view (panel ten), and even sit down on a bench for a moment of repose (panel seventeen). Furthermore, they are so tiny and cute that they hardly seem to pose a threat. If they are indeed aliens, they might just have been dispatched out of curiosity about a different civilization.

We do not know where they come from and how unlike their world is from ours, but they certainly visit what must appear to us as a strange town. So in fact the story presents us with two instances of otherness, and it is exactly this double alterity that could give direction to a post-colonial reading of “City.” As we have already indicated in our interpretation of this story in the section on possible world theory, Wasco’s city is so strange it produces more questions than answers, and a default reaction to that on the part of the reader could be to look for recognizable elements in order to diminish the alienation that the weirdness of the setting might create. The bird in panel six, the various sidewalks, and the art show in panel thirteen can certainly help to reach this goal, and while the architecture and urbanization are definitely bizarre, they seem to have required an ingenuity with which readers might be familiar.

In our view, the size and look of the two visitors can also contribute to alleviating the reader’s confusion when developing the “City” storyworld. As already suggested, they do not look dangerous. In fact they are funny enough to make us feel at ease, and the friendly dog in particular adds an element of peaceful normality despite what we perceive as unusual. Maybe for the visitors this is just another city, which would explain their quiet behavior, but in the interpretation developed here this consideration is overruled by the reader’s quite normal wish to come to terms with a world he or she can only find quite strange.

The two alterities in the story do not compete, nor do they cancel each other out; rather they both feature elements that enable us to behave like the little alien and the dog when visiting the city along with them. We might feel like pointing to the interesting artwork or quietly admiring the imagination of the architects who designed the buildings. Wasco has presented a remarkable world that is sufficiently friendly for us so that we do not have to adjust the identity we perform in its assembly. This allows for at least two different interpretive responses. If the story merely reinforces the identity of those who process it and does not call attention to itself for doing so, “City” might be reproached for the domestication of alterity typical of the colonial scenario. With its harmless visitors and its somewhat quaint setting, the story definitely takes the sting out of the challenge these alterities might pose for the status quo. If the redoubling of strange elements

makes the notion of “other” elements explicit, “City” can be said to thematize alterity in pointing us to the ease with which we project “our” experiences and values on “their” reality. Obviously this does not mean that the story eventually has to be considered subversive, just that it may entail a consideration of “our” reflexes in a confrontation with the other.

Just like our postcolonial reading of “Pegasian,” this interpretation of “City” may be decried as an instance of harmful armchair criticism because it relates a fundamental issue like identity/alterity to what looks like a fancy comic strip about a visit from outer space. In this reading we even make an extra move, in the sense that we could be seen to dehumanize alterity by extending the other to the impression made by a city that may lack a human population.

3.4. Cultural Narratology and Socio-narratology

People rarely invent stories from scratch. There are millions of stories out there, circulating through society and influencing our way of thinking and behaving. Narratives, as Arthur W. Frank says, “inform human life. Stories inform in the sense of providing information, but more significantly, stories give form—temporal and spatial orientation, coherence, meaning, intention, and especially boundaries—to lives that inherently lack form.”⁵³⁰ This is a two-way street: people tell stories, and stories shape people. More generally, people structure what is (objectively) out there and are (subjectively) structured in the process of doing so.

The interaction between subject and object is the most general dimension of the framework for the following discussion of cultural narratology and socio-narratology. They both want to grasp the interaction between preexisting stories circulating in society and individual stories using these templates. This back and forth is common to literary narratives *and* everyday stories: they both inevitably draw on templates for storytelling. Narrative templates take many forms, ranging from clichés, presuppositions, and stereotypes to commonplaces, topoi, doxas, and received ideas. As Ruth Amossy and Anne Herschberg Pierrot have demonstrated, each kind of template has its own way of structuring individual narratives.⁵³¹ Preexisting templates offer possibilities, but they also imply constraints. The study of how

readers process these templates forms the core business of social and cultural narratology.

3.4.1. SOCIO-NARRATOLOGY

This broad label covers a wide variety of narrative studies that look at the link between stories and the social context in which they appear and function.⁵³² These efforts range from quite specific to very broad. The “socio-narratological approach” David Herman advocated in 1999 is an example of the former.⁵³³ It relies on Labovian sociolinguistics and to a lesser extent on discourse analysis, pragmatics, and cognitive science (especially with regard to “narrative competence”) to overcome the problems associated with classical, structuralist narratology.⁵³⁴ Structuralism not only separated narratives from their context; it further reduced them to abstract deep structures, thereby losing the concrete, social functions of narratives. Herman seeks to realign stories with their “linguistic, cognitive, and contextual factors.”⁵³⁵

While this proposal limits the scope of socio-narratology to linguistic and cognitive elements, the “socio-narratology” put forward by Mark Currie takes contextualization much further by including the social, cultural, and political implications of narratives.⁵³⁶ This type of narratology gives up its classical stance of objectivity and neutrality, because it strives for “an ideological unmasking which operates at the level of engaged textual analysis.”⁵³⁷ This entails a view on narrative—partly influenced by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida—that exceeds the structuralist definitions: “narratives are not inventions of the mind but political and ideological practices as much a part of the material texture of reality as bombs and factories, wars and revolutions.”⁵³⁸

Situated between these two extremes of a sociolinguistic and a political socio-narratology is the narrative theory proposed by Arthur W. Frank.⁵³⁹ His *Letting Stories Breathe*, subtitled *A Socio-Narratology*, combines a detailed analysis of six narrative texts with a view to their contextual creation, function, and circulation. Frank does not distinguish literary narratives from everyday storytelling but draws attention to what they *do* in real life, that is, in their social context. To elucidate this practical functioning, he makes use of the “praxiological theory” developed by Pierre Bourdieu. More specifically, Frank develops the concept of “narrative habitus.”⁵⁴⁰ He combines it with the

*Narrative
habitus*

work of Anne Harrington to study the interaction between preexisting templates and individual narratives.

To elucidate the concept of narrative habitus, it is necessary to summarize Bourdieu's basic scheme of linking up objective conditions (which he studies as "structures") with their subjective transformations (or "structurings," in his terminology). According to Bourdieu, any practice (in our case: of storytelling and interpretation) is the result of an interplay between on the one hand the *habitus*—the system of dispositions of a person or a group—and on the other hand the more or less institutionalized context or *field*.⁵⁴¹ These two factors are structured by objective conditions such as sex, class, and economic capital. The habitus is the interiorization of those conditions; the field their exteriorization. To the extent that habitus and field are structured by the same conditions, they have been prestructured to work in unison. This is basically an implicit and latent process in which the individual only has to follow his or her own inclination (habitus) to do exactly what he or she has to do according to the institution in which he or she functions. For instance, anyone applying for an academic job typically has the right (i.e., the minimal) requirements for the job. Bourdieu recognizes that there are exceptions, but these, he claims, are rare and are filtered out in the process of alignment between habitus and field.

Groups sharing the same narrative habitus would make up what Ansgar Nünning calls "narrative communities," i.e. communities forged and held together by the stories their members tell about themselves and their culture as well as by conventionalized forms of storytelling and cultural plots."⁵⁴² They could also be called "interpretive communities"⁵⁴³ or "discursive communities."⁵⁴⁴ Any reader or storyteller is always part of at least one such community, and this structures his or her use and interpretation of narratives.

Frank distinguishes four dimensions of the narrative habitus. First, he says, "narrative habitus involves a *repertoire* of stories that a person at least recognizes and that a group shares." Next, "narrative habitus provides the *competence* to use this repertoire as embodied and mostly tacit knowledge. Narrative habitus is the feel for what story makes a good follow-up to a previous story; what story fits which occasion; who wants to hear what story when." Third, the narrative habitus involves "a person's *taste* in stories, with taste predicting which future

stories a person will be open to.”⁵⁴⁵ Finally, it implies a “tacit knowledge” that leads to “*predictable plot completions*: if people are told an incomplete story, how will they complete the plot?”⁵⁴⁶

Frank proposes “a distinction between stories that people tell about their own lives and commonly available narratives that are the resources people use to construct their own stories.”⁵⁴⁷ This ties in with our two-way interaction between narrative templates circulating in a culture and personal narratives told by people, including literary authors.⁵⁴⁸ Frank refers to Anne Harrington’s *The Cure Within* to distinguish between stories and narratives.⁵⁴⁹ Harrington holds that

stories are living, local, and specific. They are the things we read in books and newspapers, hear on the bus, tell over dinner, and use to guide behavior and experience. They refer to immediate, concrete events, people, scientific findings, and more. Narratives, however, are *templates*: they provide us with tropes and plotlines that help us understand the larger import of specific stories we hear, read, or see in action. They also help us construct specific stories of our own—including ones about our own experience—that others can recognize and affirm. We learn these narrative templates from our *culture*, not in the way we might formally learn the rules of grammar in school, but in the way we might unconsciously learn the rules of grammar at home—by being exposed to multiple individual examples of living stories that rely on them.⁵⁵⁰

This distinction between story and narrative unfortunately is confusing, since it does not align with the clear narratological meaning of the two terms: story is the reconstructed chronological order, or Genettean *histoire*, whereas narrative is the way the story is organized for the audience, that is, Genettean *récit* (see chapter 2 of this handbook). Still, the distinction between concrete stories and cultural templates is essential, and the idea that these templates are culturally structured and acquired implicitly connects with Bourdieu’s ideas on the embodiment of objective conditions. These templates are not simply out there (in the various fields, such as the typical stories of the distracted professor in the academic field or of the brave soldier in the military field); they are also “in here,” embodied, sedimented into our dispositions,

*Narrative
negotiation*

our more or less conscious tendencies and cognitive schemes. It is precisely because of their double nature that cultural templates can become forces for creating and interpreting personal and literary narratives. The double nature reflects the reconciliation between field and habitus presented above. This harmonization provides the individual with a degree of freedom to adapt and transform templates. In the next section we call this “narrative negotiation,” denoting the give and take between the personal and the cultural that takes place in this process of adapting what is out there to what is “in here.”

Although Frank takes his cue from Bourdieu, he reduces the latter’s sociological scheme to a form of dialogue. More specifically, he combines Bourdieu with Wayne Booth’s view on narrative as a dialogue directed by an implied author and demanding reciprocal respect between the partners in the conversation. Stories should be treated as friends; telling and interpreting stories is subjected to a type of “ethical criticism”⁵⁵¹ that Bourdieu would no doubt relegate to “the imaginary anthropology of subjectivism.”⁵⁵² To Bourdieu, (authorial) intentions are post hoc rationalizations of the dispositions contained in the habitus.⁵⁵³

3.4.2. CULTURAL NARRATOLOGY

As Astrid Erll and Simone Roggendorf have shown in their illuminating historical overview of cultural narratology,⁵⁵⁴ there is an enormous variety in this field, ranging from New Historicism in the late 1980s to cognitive studies in the late 2010s.⁵⁵⁵ On the most general level an understanding of the uses of culturally determined narrative templates could start from Stephen Greenblatt’s poetics of culture.⁵⁵⁶ Much like Bourdieu, he investigates the conditions that inform practices and ideas, especially the aesthetic experience. Greenblatt’s search for “the objective conditions of this enchantment” leads him to a process that is first and foremost cultural,⁵⁵⁷ whereas the same search led Bourdieu to social and economic processes. According to Greenblatt, “the power of art” and more generally of any cultural product, including narrative,⁵⁵⁸ depends upon the success of the twofold interaction, mentioned above, between a particular narrative and the “collective genres, narrative patterns, and linguistic conventions” upon which they depend.⁵⁵⁹ Any kind of storytelling includes the transformation of “a set of received stories and generic expectations.”⁵⁶⁰

Wolfgang Müller-Funk studies this transformation in his attempt to develop “a narrative theory of disciplines that study culture.”⁵⁶¹ He starts from the idea that “narrative is a very powerful—maybe even the most powerful—symbolic ‘weapon’ in structuring a world that is always, in the end, a cultural one.”⁵⁶² With references to speech act theory and Wittgenstein’s language games, Müller-Funk submits that narratives constitute social and collective reality. With a reference to postpsychoanalytic theories of the narrative self, he claims that narratives are also essential in the construction of individual identity.⁵⁶³ The question then becomes, “To what extent is there a difference between the narrative, identity-forming templates of the individual and those of the grand narratives of the society in which the individual’s life is embedded?”⁵⁶⁴ Just like Frank and Bourdieu,⁵⁶⁵ Müller-Funk points to the embodiment as the central link between general and individual: “The present investigation starts from the idea that ‘transcendental’ entities that cannot be experienced, such as society and nation, are translated into experience as they are constructed in ‘bodily’ and everyday practices.”⁵⁶⁶

More specifically, individual and collective narratives make use of “the same reservoir: the stock of narrative forms.”⁵⁶⁷ Müller-Funk locates this reservoir and this construction in the implicit realm of common sense. He even adds that the most important narrative templates—that is, those that have a determining influence—are not explicit but implicit.⁵⁶⁸ They circulate in media coverage, advertisements, and other contexts (fields, in Bourdieu’s terminology) that use a general narrative template when telling a story that seems to be particular.⁵⁶⁹ They legitimize what is generally accepted (but abstract, transcendental, not experienced) by turning it into a particular narrative (concrete, daily, corporeal, experienced).⁵⁷⁰

To Müller-Funk “there is by definition no culture possible without narratives and narrating.”⁵⁷¹ He holds that shared narrative templates form the basis of any culture, defined as a narrative community: “Without doubt, narratives are the foundation of collective, national ideas and are constitutive of the politics of identity and difference. Cultures can always be seen as narrative communities that distinguish themselves by their narrative reservoir.”⁵⁷² Individual narratives contribute to this community formation because every narrative, in

Müller-Funk's view, entails a combination of personal and communal elements.

*Narrative,
psychology,
and culture*

The narrative meeting point between the collective and the individual here goes hand in hand with an interaction between culture and psychology. This connects with the work of Jerome Bruner, the psychologist and narrative theorist who stressed the constructive as well as the identity- and community-making aspect of culture and its narratives: "By virtue of participation in culture, meaning is rendered public and shared. Our culturally adapted way of life depends upon shared meanings and shared concepts and depends as well upon shared modes of discourse for negotiating differences in meaning and interpretation."⁵⁷³ Culture, in Bruner's view, imposes itself in narrative forms, more specifically via templates.⁵⁷⁴ Bruner talks of "prototype narratives,"⁵⁷⁵ that is, "a community's stored narrative resources and its equally precious tool kit of interpretive techniques: its myths, its typology of human plights, but also its traditions for locating and resolving divergent narratives."⁵⁷⁶

*From structure
to culture*

Mieke Bal, who started out as one of the founding classical, structuralist narratologists, quickly became uneasy with the context-free close readings structuralism tended to favor and therefore turned "narrative analysis into an activity of *cultural analysis*."⁵⁷⁷ The various editions of her path-breaking book *Narratology*, which appeared between 1985 and 2017, show an ever-increasing interest in cultural context. She herself mentions "the insistence [*sic*], in this third edition, on the cultural status of narrative"⁵⁷⁸ and repeatedly underlines her "move from narratology to cultural analysis."⁵⁷⁹ Bal argues that narrative interpretation is always "both subjective and susceptible to cultural constraints."⁵⁸⁰ Her combination of cultural analysis and narratology has developed into a form of cultural criticism that does not shy away from political and ideological statements.⁵⁸¹ Even in the preface to the first edition of *Narratology*, Bal had already had this to say about her discipline: "I have myself used this theory for both aesthetic and political criticism, and found soon enough that these cannot, or should not, be separated. Hence, the need of more theory, beyond narratology."⁵⁸² While cultural narratology does not always go this far, any analysis obviously has ideological and political implications.

A practical example of the two-sided process by which narratives inform culture and vice versa is provided by Alan Nadel's work on "a privileged American narrative" of the 1950s: the story of containment.⁵⁸³ This typical story installs a dual relation between the safe haven of American domesticity (inside) and the threat of the communist and foreign outside world. As such it mediates between the individual and the collective, the small scale and the political: "Setting up a mythic nuclear family as the universal container of democratic values, the cultural narratives of my childhood made personal behavior part of a global strategy at the same time as they personalized the international struggle with communism."⁵⁸⁴ The containment narrative invents a world of endangered security that not only becomes factual in American life during the Cold War but that also depends upon this life and, more generally, upon national and international political relations. Again, creation and reproduction go hand in hand: "Narratives are not the opposite of facts, but rather their source and their condition of possibility." Again, the personal narrative depends upon the template it negotiates: "Personal narration is required for any form of historical narrative and also, necessarily, disrupts it."⁵⁸⁵ The personal retelling takes care of the reproduction and the dissemination of the cultural narrative, "with a contagion that resembles viral epidemics."⁵⁸⁶

An eye-opening study of the link between cultural stereotypes and narrative devices is *Challenging Canada*, by Gabriele Helms, who starts from the observation that "many contemporary Canadian novels call into question ideas of Canada as a benign and tolerant country."⁵⁸⁷ These novels give voice to what the cultural doxa habitually excludes, such as (post)colonial racism, sexual abuse, and incest. Helms takes the idea of voice literally and tries to show how multivoiced narrative devices challenge the authoritative voice of doxa. The prevailing cultural images are studied "as socio-historical constructions"⁵⁸⁸; the narrative devices are studied in terms of "Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism."⁵⁸⁹

This link between sociocultural images and narrative devices is what cultural narratology amounts to for Helms: "To treat dialogism only as a literary device would diminish and depoliticize Bakhtin's approach. Only a few steps have been taken, however, towards a cultural criticism

of literature, especially Canadian literature, that uses dialogism *to consider formal practices within social contexts*. I believe that *cultural narratology* would enable us to recognize that narrative techniques are not neutral and transparent forms to be filled with content, and that dialogic relations in narrative structures are ideologically informed.”⁵⁹⁰

As Helms concedes, “the examination of ideological signification in narrative structures” does not imply that a given narrative technique inevitably has one particular ideological signification.⁵⁹¹ The Proteus principle developed by Meir Sternberg holds here: “in different contexts [. . .] the same form may fulfill different functions and different forms the same function.”⁵⁹² This goes right to the heart of cultural narratology, which wants “to examine the connections between narrative forms and the historically determined understandings of reality that inform them.”⁵⁹³ In Helms’s words, a narrative “is not merely reactive”; it also involves “radical action,” challenging prevailing cultural stories and schemes.⁵⁹⁴

*Narrative
and force*

In the words of Ansgar Nünning, who has made a series of contributions to cultural narratology,⁵⁹⁵ narratives do not merely circulate and pass on “mental dispositions, i.e. dominant ways of thinking, convictions, norms, and structures of knowledge as they demarcate a culture.”⁵⁹⁶ Narratives are “cognitive forces”⁵⁹⁷: they actively create and transform mental schemes, cultural norms, and so on. Cultural narratology therefore should look at the two-sided interaction between culture and narrative. As Nünning puts it, “Cultural narratology strives to cross the border between textual formalism and historical contextualism, and [. . .] to close the gaps between narratological bottom-up analysis and cultural top-down synthesis by putting the analytical toolkit developed by narratology to the service of context-sensitive interpretations of novels.”⁵⁹⁸ In 2013 he pithily defined cultural narratology as “a theory of narration whose theoretical groundwork takes into account the cultural determination of narratives, the historical variation of narrative forms, and the cultural relevance of narratives.”⁵⁹⁹

To schematize this dynamic of (re)structuring and being structured, Nünning develops a three-dimensional model based on Paul Ricœur’s three components of mimesis.⁶⁰⁰ To come to “a clarification of the relation between, on the one hand, narratives, esp. cultural narratives,

and, on the other hand, their contexts and culture,”⁶⁰¹ Nünning distinguishes between three aspects: “prefiguration” (narratives are culturally formed; in Bourdieu’s terms this would equal “being structured”), “configuration” (narratives feature what structures them in their own specific way), and “refiguration” (narratives may transform existing models and forms; in Bourdieu’s terms this would equal “[re]structuring”). These three terms make clear “to what extent narratives fall back on culturally available plots and prefigured narrative templates.”⁶⁰² For instance, Thomas Pynchon’s *Bleeding Edge* can be said to toy with preexisting cultural narratives about plots to destroy America. These templates belong to the prefiguration. The way Pynchon’s novel may be thought to play with these templates makes up the configuration. If Pynchon’s novel actually succeeds in transforming the cultural stereotypes (e.g., by convincing readers that his plot is actually more “realistic” than the doxa), it is responsible for the “refiguration” of cultural templates and thereby affects the worldview of these readers. Typically, this “refiguration” will affect only some aspects of a template while other aspects remain in place.⁶⁰³

With the approaches outlined above, it is clear the production and meaning of narratives must be studied within the concrete social and cultural context in which these narratives arise and function. Narrative theory must incorporate the production and processing of narratives as a form of *negotiation* in which “cultural materials” are *circulated* and transformed, not just by authors, but also by readers and institutions.⁶⁰⁴ “A culture,” Greenblatt claims, “is a particular network of negotiations for the exchange of material goods, ideas, and—through institutions like enslavement, adoption, or marriage—people.”⁶⁰⁵ Goods, ideas, and people are examples of “cultural materials,” a term that combines the traditionally distinct symbolic and materialistic approaches to culture and that shows just how inseparable these two aspects are. Any so-called social object is a cultural construct, which in its turn depends upon these objects.

So, cultural materials are exchanged and thereby circulate through culture. This process involves a negotiation in two senses of the word. First, negotiation means coming to terms with cultural ideas or topics, some of which may be quite thorny to navigate, as a driver might negotiate a (sharp) curve. Second, negotiation indicates that the form,

*Toward a model:
negotiation and
circulation*

range, and freedom of the circulation is open to a continuous give and take: some materials are easier to circulate than others, and some forms of transmission are more acceptable than others. Circulation and negotiation affect all cultural materials, including literary works of art. From this perspective literary writers may become skilled manipulators of cultural materials: “Through their ability to construct resonant stories, their command of effective imagery, and above all their sensitivity to the greatest collective creation of any culture—language—literary artists are skilled at manipulating this economy. They take symbolic materials from one zone of the culture and move them to another, augmenting their emotional force, altering their significance, linking them with other materials taken from a different zone, changing their place in a larger social design.”⁶⁰⁶

Greenblatt regards works of art as “products of collective negotiation and exchange.”⁶⁰⁷ The value, meaning, and “power of art” arise in a process of “half-hidden cultural transaction” that moves “cultural materials [. . .] from one culturally demarcated zone to another” and thereby produces a “cultural circulation of social energy.”⁶⁰⁸ In Bourdieu’s terms one would say that narratives travel from one field to another, for example, from the journalistic field (a story in newspapers) to the literary field (the story adapted for a novel), or from religion to law (e.g., biblical characters and stories used in a court of law). This traveling goes back and forth, may entail a wide variety of fields, and always involves a transformation of the narrative, which is precisely what gives the narrative its own dynamic, interest, and power.

*Against the
communication
model*

To Greenblatt, a work of art (e.g., a literary narrative) is not a form of communication between a sender and a receiver via a message but rather a “collective dynamic circulation of pleasures, anxieties, and interests,” an exchange of “social energy inherent in a cultural practice.”⁶⁰⁹ The conventional communication model posits abstract and subjective agents (i.e., sender and receiver), whereas these exist only within a group (the communities mentioned above, that is, the groups of people with a comparable habitus) and within a specific context (the fields). Narrative production and interpretation are social and cultural processes of negotiation and circulation, which are in fact often overlooked within a communicational framework.

This cultural criticism of the communication model goes further

than a reformulation of the agents and the type of communication, for example, without a narrator⁶¹⁰ or directly with the author.⁶¹¹ It confirms the view of Dixon and Bortolussi, who claim “text is not communication.”⁶¹² In the case of literary narratives there is no real interaction because the so-called sender (whether it’s the author, the implied author, or the narrator) never talks back to the receiver (the reader) and is in fact a post hoc creation of that reader. Sooner or later the sender’s intentions crop up in the applications of the conventional model,⁶¹³ and these are, as Dixon and Bortolussi rightly suggest, very hard or even impossible to determine.⁶¹⁴ Typically these intentions are inventions of the reader to legitimize his or her interpretation.

Along the same lines the so-called communication model is a legitimization of a readerly construction. From the cultural perspective, this construction arises in the process of negotiation and circulation. It is neither completely free (the reader is formed by the objective conditions and by the field) nor completely determined (the narrative habitus transforms these conditions and fields). Using a communication model with such abstract agents as “sender” (or “narrator”) and “receiver” (or “reader”) suggests—wrongly—that there is a horizontal and reciprocal relation of equals whereas in fact the relation is skewed (in our view the readers have the upper hand, but they are not free) and structured by social and cultural factors.

If we turn to Bourdieu’s scheme, the most general form of negotiation in the case of narrative is situated in the give and take between the habitus (of the narrating and/or interpreting agent) and the field (the context in which the text is produced and/or offered). Most probably, a professional narratologist reading and analyzing a novel in an academic setting (e.g., for a peer-reviewed publication) will come up with an interpretation that differs from the one developed by an untrained reader relaxing on a beach. This interaction between habitus and field is driven and guided by objective conditions such as age and economic capital. The reader’s leeway always derives from the interaction: it depends on the reader’s conditions, context (field, including the narrative text), and (narrative) habitus. As a result, the process of give and take differs with every reader, text, and field. Literary texts are not necessarily or intrinsically more convincing or coercive than other texts. Nor are they inevitably more undetermined or open. All

*General theories
on negotiation*

these characteristics are being attributed during the negotiation between reader and field. The text is (merely one) part of this process.

From the viewpoint of narrative production, Greenblatt describes this negotiation between habitus and field without recourse to Bourdieu's terms: "The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society."⁶¹⁵ The shared repertoire refers to the group habitus, while the social institutions refer to Bourdieu's fields. The interplay between the two components finds its form in the narrative practice. To Bourdieu the receptive part of the process typically mirrors the productive part as the fields of production and of consumption have normally been structured by similar objective conditions. In Bourdieu's terms there is a "structural homology which guarantees objective orchestration between the logic of the field of production and the logic of the field of consumption."⁶¹⁶ Obviously, such an orchestration (in the sense of harmonization) on the basis of similar objective conditions does not always exist, and readers may find themselves confronted with texts and fields to which they feel completely alien. In that case too they may want to find some way to negotiate the narrative at hand.⁶¹⁷

*Narrative
theories on
negotiation*

Narrative theorists too have paid attention to negotiation as an intrinsic part of narrative production and interpretation. Liesbeth Korthals Altes does not merely use the theory of Bourdieu to deal with the authority of the writer and the value attributed to literature.⁶¹⁸ She also relies on Greenblatt to come to her first usage of the term "negotiation," the very general meaning of culture as a "network of negotiation."⁶¹⁹ For her second and more specific use of the term, she refers to our work.⁶²⁰ In doing so, she defines negotiation as "the mental gymnastics involved in individual textual interpretation."⁶²¹ Korthals Altes's analyses show that "culture requires the transmission and negotiation of ways of doing things, of preferences, values, and world-views; and also the idea that narratives, and the arts, play a central role in this process."⁶²² Her work focuses on "the negotiation of meanings and values" in literary narratives and reveals the crucial part played by ethos (a negotiation between authorial posturing and readerly constructions) in that process.⁶²³

The most famous example of a theorist paying attention to narrative negotiation is probably Jerome Bruner (who has already appeared in this section because of his emphasis on the interaction between culture and narrative). His view on negotiation as a process of conflict resolution presents the first narratological meaning of the term, which is extremely widespread. Bruner claims that “negotiated meanings” solve issues and circulate widely in a culture thanks to a narrative process: “The viability of a culture inheres in its capacity for resolving conflicts, for explicating differences and renegotiating communal meanings. The ‘negotiated meanings’ discussed by social anthropologists or culture critics as essential to the conduct of a culture are made possible by narrative’s apparatus for dealing simultaneously with canonicity and exceptionality.”⁶²⁴

More generally, Bruner claims “that meaning and reality are created and not discovered, that negotiation is the art of constructing new meanings by which individuals can regulate their relations with each other.”⁶²⁵ He is unequivocal in his admiration for narrative’s power: “This method of negotiating and renegotiating meanings by the mediation of narrative interpretation is, it seems to me, one of the crowning achievements of human development in the ontogenetic, cultural, and phylogenetic senses of that expression.”⁶²⁶

Narratologists situate negotiation as conflict solving not only on the level of the narrative process (production and interpretation of narratives) but also on that of the narrated world. The storyworld is regularly studied as an environment for negotiating problems, conflicts, and setbacks.⁶²⁷ A combination of conflict negotiation in the narrative process and the narrated world can be found in H. Porter Abbott’s “Narrative Negotiation.”⁶²⁸ In the narrated world—of Oedipus, for instance—Abbott uncovers a negotiation of antagonisms and differences, typically between subjective longings and cultural demands. This negotiation may have various outcomes, but fundamentally they are either with or without closure. Abbott concludes “that most narratives of any complexity can be read as efforts to negotiate opposing psychological and cultural claims.”⁶²⁹ With a reference to Stanley Fish, he transposes this negotiation to the level of the reader’s interaction with a text that may conflict with his or her reading habits.

Some cognitive narratologists also look upon reading as a conflict-

solving negotiation between the frames of the reader—aspects of what we call the (narrative) habitus—and those of the text.⁶³⁰ Building on the work of Charles Fillmore⁶³¹ and Catherine Emmott,⁶³² Maria Stefanescu suggests that “all comprehension of a literary work is ultimately a negotiation between the interpretative frames imposed by the reader and those suggested by the text itself.”⁶³³

*Second meaning
of narrative
negotiation*

In cognitive forms of negotiations the idea of a definitive solution regularly disappears. Derek Matravers, for instance, submits that the mental processing of narrative centers on an unresolved “paradox of fiction.”⁶³⁴ This brings us to a second, more neutral and more general usage of the term “negotiation” in narrative theory, namely as a synonym of dealing with or interacting with culturally available templates, ideas, and narratives. David Herman studies “how stories portray model persons in narrative worlds, and in doing so at once draw on and contribute to the models of persons circulating in a given culture or subculture.”⁶³⁵ Brian Richardson demonstrates how postcolonial narratives negotiate the past and the different, sometimes opposed audiences they target.⁶³⁶ Hilary P. Dannenberg finds that “Britain’s ethnic minorities may find themselves in a theoretically multicultural society, but they are also located in a country full of the cultural memories of colonialism. They must negotiate their contemporary British identity in a postimperial cultural zone.”⁶³⁷

Obviously, this second sense of negotiation (dealing with contextual aspects) can go hand in hand with the first (solving conflicts). Helms studies Canadian novels as narratives trying to deal with colonial and postcolonial ideas, narratives, and templates. In this way the narratives attempt to resolve conflicts: “Only through the analysis and negotiation of these [(post)colonial] constructions, their values, norms, and truths, can we create levels of consensus that will allow us to interact socially.”⁶³⁸ A comparable view on negotiation as dealing with the context *and* solving conflicts can be found in David B. Morris’s study of narrative in medicine: “In contrast to principle alone, narrative in its detailed, emotion-rich representation of experience can help us recognize implicit values and negotiate conflicts of moral action within a new postmodern landscape of corporations, governments, and health care systems.”⁶³⁹

One particular form of this second type of narratological use of ne-

gotiation is coming to terms with another text or theory. In *Rethinking Postmodernism(s)*, Katrin Amian studies the novels of Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, and Jonathan Safran Foer as “pragmatist negotiations” with Charles S. Peirce: “I seek to engage critically the ‘pragmatist negotiations’ these texts stage. The question that informs my readings of *V.*, *Beloved*, and *Everything Is Illuminated*, in other words, is not how these texts reflect the ‘moments of frailty’ Peirce’s pragmatist epistemology allows for but how they negotiate the concepts of creativity and consensus Peirce holds out.”⁶⁴⁰ More generally, Amian’s study is “opening up potential ways of negotiating the tensions between Peirce’s philosophical ambitions and the cultural politics of postmodernism.”⁶⁴¹

A third sense in which narratologists use the term “negotiation” is the everyday meaning of giving and taking in order to find the middle ground. This simply indicates the leeway, the freedom one has in the narrative process. For instance, with regard to actual, oral storytelling, David Herman states, “In general, then, narratives can serve particular communicative purposes only on the basis of a process of negotiation between storytellers and their interlocutors.”⁶⁴²

*Third meaning
of narrative
negotiation*

Another process of give and take appears in Bernard S. Jackson’s analysis of the interactions between narrative and legal discourse: “Narratives provide constraints upon—and perhaps even, at the substantive level, presumptions for—the construction of sense, but within these constraints negotiation remains possible.”⁶⁴³ Narrative meaning arises in this process of give and take. As Barbara Czarniawska says, “the power of the story does not depend on its connection to the world outside the story but in [*sic*] its openness for negotiating meaning.”⁶⁴⁴ To Anastasia Christou, “identity discourse” implies “negotiations between the local and the global, the translation of the imaginary and the produced articulations of culture.”⁶⁴⁵

A comparable negotiation between local and global can be found in narrative theories informed by gender and postcolonial studies. Working within the former discipline, Ruth E. Page mentions that “narratives that come from literature and from other domains [. . .] could be useful in negotiating between localized perspectives and wider trends.”⁶⁴⁶ In postcolonial studies Homi K. Bhabha situates narratives in the “in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated”; he adds that his collection

Nation and Narration starts “from such narrative positions between cultures and nations, theories and texts, the political, the poetic and the painterly, the past and the present.”⁶⁴⁷ On a more general plane Koschorke submits that “cultural distinctions [. . .] consist of countless boundary regimes of local and global scope, which up to a certain point imply processes of swapping, negotiation and communication.”⁶⁴⁸ When discussing the freedom individuals have to formulate their own narrative and identity, Mark Freeman stresses the negotiation with the cultural context: “Narrative freedom—the freedom of the narrative imagination—is not limitless. Rather, it is circumscribed and delimited by innumerable forces both inside and outside the perimeter of the self. Let me be clear about this issue. ‘Cultural givens’ can be, and often are, negotiated by members of a culture. There can also be serious disagreements about what these cultural givens are.”⁶⁴⁹

Three meanings
of narrative
negotiation

As can be expected, the three meanings of negotiation mentioned above—conflict solving, dealing with contextual templates, everyday give and take—rarely occur in isolation. In *Narrative Negotiations*, Kristin Veel presents an interesting combination.⁶⁵⁰ She looks upon the novel as a hybrid genre that combines narrative and informative strands in an endless and mutual interaction. She defines “narrative negotiation” as the process by which “ways of organizing information—*information structures*—are adopted, adapted, and incorporated into the narrative of cultural imagination with a particular focus on *literary fiction*.”⁶⁵¹ The information structures are culturally organized and transformed in fictional narratives. Veel pays special attention to those novels that “overwhelm the reader with too much information.”⁶⁵² She singles out such overwhelming novels in the precomputer age (J. W. Goethe, Robert Musil, and Arno Schmidt) and in our digital times.⁶⁵³ The reader has to come to terms with a narrative that contains too much information, so negotiation here involves not only the novel’s work with the cultural structures of information but also the reader’s way of coping with this. Negotiation here involves both resolving problems and dealing with contextual structures.

General theories
on circulation

Circulation in its most general form refers to the transference from one social and cultural field to another. This is a collective process that regularly involves institutions (e.g., when publishing houses negotiate deals with film companies to turn a novel into a movie) and that typi-

cally depends on objective conditions such as class, sex, and age. These conditions assure the homology between the various fields and thereby make the migration and circulation easy. As we said before, the homology may be quite small. For instance, the circulation of supposedly original African stories in nineteenth-century western Europe did not rest on a similarity between African and European conditions but rather on the difference between the two, which helped to produce the appeal of the exotic. The degree of similarity and/or difference that underpins the circulation of narratives is open to negotiation.

Given the popularity of the term “circulation” in economics, such as in Marxist theories on the circulation of commodities, the development of an economics of narrative cannot be surprising. Jean-Pierre Faye’s “critique of narrative economics”⁶⁵⁴ studies “circulation” as a process that disseminates “economic signs” and “ideological narratives” in one and the same movement.⁶⁵⁵ Although it may be masked, there is always “a link between those movements in the production and circulation of signs in real life, on the one hand, and the production and circulation of ideological narratives, on the other hand.”⁶⁵⁶

Narratologists have also paid attention to narrative circulation. In the first proffered meaning of the term, narrative circulation refers to the act of telling as a form of dissemination and distribution: “Very literally, a primary ‘action’ that narrative performs is the circulation (telling, receiving, desiring) of narrative.”⁶⁵⁷ David Herman mentions “the bewilderingly diverse narratives circulating in the culture.”⁶⁵⁸ Sandra Heinen discusses various approaches dealing with “the analysis of stories circulating within an organization.”⁶⁵⁹ What is circulated in these examples is narrative itself.

*First meaning
of narrative
circulation*

Vilma Hänninen has developed a “model of narrative circulation,” one in which a told narrative, a lived narrative, and an inner narrative interact with each other and with a “personal stock of stories.”⁶⁶⁰ The latter derives from a “cultural stock of stories” and the “situation” in which the narrative arises.⁶⁶¹ The “cultural stock of stories” ties in with the templates and the culturally prevailing narratives mentioned earlier; the “personal stock of stories” can be linked with what Arthur W. Frank calls the narrative habitus; and the “situation” is close to Bourdieu’s “field.” Hänninen defines the inner narrative “as a process of weaving together the situation and cultural story models.”⁶⁶² These

can be linked to the habitus's negotiation between field and cultural templates. She sees the told narrative "as an expression of the inner narrative" and "as a shaper of the inner narrative," which ties in with the interaction between habitus and field.⁶⁶³ The lived narrative seen as an enactment and transformation of the inner narrative can be compared to the constitutive and creative powers of narratives considered above.

*Second meaning
of narrative
circulation*

In a second narratological sense of circulation, narrative becomes a vehicle for the circulation of what Greenblatt might call cultural materials, such as ideas, arguments, and ideology. What is circulated here is the content of the narrative. This view usually focuses on the cultural context and considers narrative as the heart of cultural circulation, as explained by N. Katherine Hayles: "Culture circulates through science no less than science circulates through culture. The heart that keeps this circulatory system flowing is narrative—narratives about culture, narratives within culture, narratives about science, narratives within science."⁶⁶⁴ Hayles adds that this circulation transforms and constitutes cultural materials, rather than simply carrying them from one field to another.

Narratives that circulate a lot (in the first sense of the term) and that touch upon important cultural issues (in the second sense of circulation) may be called dominant. David Herman mentions "dominant storylines or master narratives circulating in the culture at large." These narratives structure our thinking "about the way the world is,"⁶⁶⁵ which again indicates their creative power.⁶⁶⁶ As mentioned earlier, one aspect of cultural narratology and socio-narratology focuses on the link between these dominant narratives and the specific narratives at hand, for example, in a novel. These specific forms may go against the prevailing templates and may circulate in more restricted areas or fields than the culturally dominant narrative. David Herman illustrates this with reference to the novels of Ian McEwan: "Rather than simply shoring up a culture's major storylines, post-modern literary narratives like McEwan's engage with them (and the normative frameworks that they embed and work to reproduce) in a more or less critical or reflexive manner. That said, because of complex ways in which the institutions and practices of literary writing intersect with broader cultural institutions and practices, there is no a priori guarantee that a given literary text will align itself with the

array of 'counternarratives' circulating in a given setting, in opposition to more dominant storylines."⁶⁶⁷

Third, narrative studies have often drawn attention to the circulation of general narrative types, codes, patterns, and templates in concrete stories. Astrid Erll discusses the "circulation of certain narrative patterns in different media."⁶⁶⁸ On the generic level the transfer and transformation of codes in the ever-changing narrative forms of the novel would provide a good example of this type of circulation.⁶⁶⁹ Another one would be the different chronotopes Mikhail Bakhtin sees as typical of the various narrative genres.⁶⁷⁰ H. Porter Abbott gives yet another example, namely the circulation of typical characters in a variety of narratives and genres: "All cultures and subcultures include numerous types that circulate through all the various narrative modes: the hypocrite, the flirt, the evil child, the Pollyanna, the strong mother, the stern father, the cheat, the shrew, the good Samaritan, the wimp, the nerd, the vixen, the stud, the schlemiel, the prostitute with a heart of gold, the guy with a chip on his shoulder, the orphan, the yuppie, the Uncle Tom, the rebel."⁶⁷¹

*Third meaning
of narrative
circulation*

"Pegasian" negotiates and circulates the cultural template of the lesson. Schooling often takes up a big part of people's lives, which is surely one of the reasons why it is such a popular topic in art—the play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw and the movie *Dead Poets Society* are just two famous examples of narratives in which strong, passionate teachers change their students' lives through education. "Pegasian" zooms in on a riding class, which seems to have all the trappings of what Ansgar Nünning would call the prefiguration of a narrative about a lesson—a competent individual is trying to transmit a skill (the ability to ride a horse) to a group; he or she is doing so in a location—or "field"—that is fit for the purpose (horses are available at the riding school and there is space for the pupils to use them in a way that facilitates the transmission of the skill); he or she disposes of the necessary attributes (a whip to control the horses so that they do not work against the educational process); and the story of the class focuses on the contact between the teacher and an individual student.

*Negotiation
and circulation
with Mutsaers*

In her configuration of the template, Mutsaers does not spend a lot of effort on the evocation of the setting or the field. She starts in medias res with the report of a dialogue between the riding master and a

pupil who is not wearing the kind of trousers that are supposedly suited to the occasion. This tacit presupposition is one of the constraints exerted by the field. So, the field is present in the story, though it is not explicitly staged.

Badly equipped pupils and teachers losing their patience over them are both staples of the prefiguration of a narrative about a lesson, but “Pegasian” clearly delights in developing this aspect. The pupil does not simply accept the admonition; she wants to know why “a real pair of riding breeches” would be so much better—that is, she wants to lay bare the tacit understanding, invisibly imposed by the field—and whether they increase the riding speed, and she even becomes sarcastic by comparing them to the fat of overweight women. This is a gross statement, but it clearly hits the mark, since the teacher gives up his or her task of trying to explain. “Pegasian” therefore seems to negotiate the cultural template of a class so as to bring out the tenuous hold of a teacher over a pupil. This hold is based on the harmony between habitus and field, that is, upon unacknowledged constraints of the field and the equally unnoticed subjugation of the habitus to those demands. The student is asking to turn this unspoken agreement into a subject of discussion.

In a class situation, authority and power can apparently be called into question quite easily, and the teacher in the story finds no better way to react than to (literally) crack the whip. He or she refuses to turn the harmonization of habitus and field into a topic of conversation. He or she simply reinstalls it, showing who is in power. Giving up on the insubordinate student, he or she prefers to reestablish the instructor’s authority by attempting to save the class for the rest of the group. The text leaves unclear whether the tension between the two protagonists has been resolved, thus perhaps slightly refiguring the narrative template of the lesson in readers for whom the teacher’s authority is the be all and end all of educational proceedings.

This outcome, however, is perhaps not exactly reinforced by the final paragraph of the story, which seems to undo the upending of the teacher-pupil relationship and the resulting point about the division of roles in the field of education. Indeed the girl “understands” the point about the relevance of the special breeches offered by the riding master, which seems to restore the roles of the template by confirming the latter’s authority. The instructor’s lack of a real explanation for the ad-

vantage of a “real pair” over a denim pair may lead to another moment of doubt on the part of the girl (“Is it the idea or is it the sensation?”), but she quickly is resigned. Still, in what could be construed as another twist in the configuration of the template, her motivation for accepting the initial advice may well derive from an interpretation of the “real pair” that is so idiosyncratic it underscores her independence from the teacher. To be sure, “taking off” thanks to a “real pair” instead of a denim pair is quite far-fetched, but this view of the trousers seems true to the individual stance the girl shows through her initial questions about them. Needless to say, whether the specific configuration of “Pegasian” leads to a refiguration of the narrative template will depend on how separate readers or communities of readers decide to value the final sentences. If these are felt to illustrate an attitude that strongly defies authority, a lesson might (perhaps only temporarily) appear as a contest of opinions rather than a transmission of knowledge or skills.

The map too is a cultural template that often circulates in a narrativized form. As a handy tool to organize a voyage, it immediately suggests action and a degree of adventure. No wonder many editions of J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* contain a map of Middle Earth, the fictional region where the epic events of the story take place. In the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* a map is even used in various sequences to represent a big journey in the story, with a dotted line being drawn from one city to another. In the digital age Google Maps and other global positioning apps put maps on our individual screens, pointing the way through the world and creating a sense of order in the process.

Maps definitely further movement, but they can be aesthetically pleasing in their own right, and it is perhaps the combination of these two effects that turns them into such valuable items. In Krol’s “The Map,” the map of a village and its surroundings is associated with forbidden pleasure, since the main character happens to spot a small part of it on a Sunday, visible in the display window of a Christian shop, the shades of which haven’t been drawn properly. The protagonist is immediately in awe of the object he partly has to imagine (“Everything clear and close, everything enlarged. Never had I seen such a map, with such minute detail”), which makes him want to acquire it as soon as he can.

Since the map of the village of Dorkwerd and its surroundings has been spotted furtively and illegitimately, its promise is inevitably high,

*Negotiation
and circulation
with Krol*

but once it is opened on the table, it does not disappoint: “A whole table full of *new things*.” Krol’s configuration of the map develops the catalyst that makes up an essential part of the prefiguration; the enticing object becomes a matrix for movement and control. It is not just that the object becomes a script for action; it is also a device for sense-making: “What excited me was the thought that it now made sense *to have been everywhere*. The prospect I was going to cover the earth with my body. To be everywhere . . .”

The main character is so enamored with this idea that he does not stop at the map he has acquired; he goes on to draw a blank map of his entire country so that he can indicate all the roads where he has biked. It looks as if his habitus is keen on mapping all the places (or fields) in the Netherlands. This development constitutes a turning point in the configuration of the template. Whereas normally the map is a tool, the protagonist’s map of the Netherlands becomes an end in itself, proof of the successes in his grandiose bid “to be everywhere.” This climactic period is rapidly followed by a letdown. Once the main character starts traveling by train, “so not really by myself and neither in direct contact with the road,” the dream of mastery and its representation on the map fades, making the object ultimately “meaningless.”

In the story as a whole, “The Map” first seems to heighten the usual functionality and visual impact of a map so as to undercut or at least relativize them in the end. Again, whether this negotiation of a cultural template leads to its refiguration will depend on the specific circumstances in which “The Map” is read. One can, for instance, imagine a reading list for a course on narrative and mobility in which the story would figure as an indictment of our need for order and control, as well as of the activities and objects it engenders. In that case, Krol’s story may have an impact on the students’ image of a map. But one can also imagine an older reader who recognizes the folly of youth in the protagonist’s behavior and regards the map as a mere stimulus for all that frantic activity, leaving it completely unassailed as an instance of cultural material.

4. Everyday Life as a Narrative Process

As we said at the outset of chapter 3, recent decades have witnessed a broadening of narratology’s scope. Narrative analyses have been ap-

plied to an ever-increasing number of social and cultural phenomena. Sometimes this implies that the narratological toolbox gets reduced to a minimum.

Such a reduction seems to be part of “storytelling,” a recent and hard-to-delineate discipline that investigates from a very broad perspective the human capacity to tell stories. Essential to the perspective are notions such as intention, goal, discussion, and balance. It seems that telling stories is a conscious and goal-directed effort to order life and to balance relations with others and with reality. A clear example of such a view can be found in “corporate storytelling,” which claims that stories are intentionally used to balance the goals and concerns of the various parties involved: “In a strategic business context, storytelling is understood as the conscious attempt to produce, promote or change a story. Thus, within the framework of corporate communication, narratives or narrative elements are used to establish and maintain the organizational brand, image, culture and identity of various groups of internal and external stakeholders.”⁶⁷² Similar to the diverging uses of the term “negotiation” we discussed above, different theorists underscore different aspects of the balancing act that storytelling is supposed to be. Birgitte Norlyk, Marianne Wolff Lundholt, and Per Krogh Hansen argue that “first wave” theorists tend to underscore equilibrium, whereas “second wave” approaches pay more attention to the disruptive aspects of storytelling.⁶⁷³

Storytelling

Whatever aspect of the balancing act is foregrounded, storytelling always zooms in on the constitutive role of narrative in everyday life, on both a small and a large scale. Narrative is never seen as a mere vehicle; it is shown to be creative and performative. Examples of small-scale analyses can be found in psychologically—and quite often therapeutically—oriented narrative studies of the self and others.⁶⁷⁴ Examples of macroapproaches are provided by narrative studies of climate change, advertising, political campaigns, and so on.⁶⁷⁵ This second type has been highlighted in the popular study *Storytelling: Bewitching the Modern Mind*, by Christian Salmon. He dissects Western capitalist economics and politics, showing that “the brand is a story,” that management depends upon storytelling, that military battles are fought in narrative terms too, and that presidential campaigns cannot succeed without the right type of storytelling.⁶⁷⁶

Quite often the performative aspect of the investigated object (i.e., storytelling) affects the investigative approach, which becomes directive and advisory. This can be seen in countless handbooks prescribing how to use storytelling in all kinds of fields and for various kinds of purposes. Handbooks of creative writing, guides for successful management, psychological self-help books, and so on—they all tend to share the storytelling approach.⁶⁷⁷ Obviously, this is a far cry from the distanced and supposedly neutral narratology defended by the structuralists and their followers.

*Narrative,
nature, and
culture*

The idea that stories are essential to everyday life is of course not new. It has received attention from all kinds of disciplines, including philosophy, religion, and Darwinian science, all of which predate the birth of narratology. The narrative turn we mentioned earlier is just one of many recent developments that have underscored the prominence of storytelling. An additional boost to narrative theories of society and culture is the rise of new digital media, which have turned the world into a network of “storytelling communities.”⁶⁷⁸ There is also of course postmodernism, which became widespread in the 1980s and which maintains that life is a story.

In line with the narrative turn, theories ranging from constructivist cultural studies to Darwinian natural sciences have upheld the crucial importance of narratives for everyday life. From a cultural perspective, a memorable instance is Christopher Nash’s groundbreaking collection of studies on storytelling in science, philosophy, and literature. It starts from the claim “that the narrative mode of discourse is omnipresent in human affairs. We’re obliged to consider the ungainly fact that in our culture, where we least expect it and even most vociferously disclaim it, there may actually be storytelling going on, and that the implications may indeed be ‘considerable.’”⁶⁷⁹ From a Darwinian perspective, it has become fashionable to talk about the “storytelling animal”⁶⁸⁰ and the “literary animal.”⁶⁸¹ Evolutionary theories treat narrative as a crucial strategy in the process of adaptation that is the engine of all evolution. Brian Boyd defines art (including narrative) from this angle: “art is an adaptation whose functions are shaping and sharing attention, and, arising from that, fostering social cohesion and creativity.”⁶⁸² Boyd’s “biocultural approach to fiction” explicitly distances itself from the “structuralist” and “poststructuralist mode [. . .] in

narratology” and instead looks for “specieswide competences” that have evolved from animal skills and that have now become unique to human beings.⁶⁸³

Although such a broad and hypothetical perspective yields interesting results, it falls outside the scope of our handbook, as it does not really rely on the toolbox of narrative analysis. We will focus on three approaches centering on the similarities and differences between everyday storytelling and literary narratives. In this discussion thorny topics we have treated before will resurface, such as the distinction between fictional and “true” storytelling, or between literary and everyday language. These issues will not be solved, but we will be able to look at them from a wider perspective than the ones presented before.

4.1. *Postmodern Narratology*

Although postmodernism has become famous (and to many, infamous) for its so-called “doctrine of panfictionality” holding that life is like a fictional narrative,⁶⁸⁴ narrative theories operating in this tradition do not study fictional and literary narratives as if they were the same as everyday conversations and stories. On the contrary, time and again postmodern narratologists underscore the rupture between the two forms of narration. In that sense they are closely linked to the unnatural narratologists we will encounter shortly. Indeed they can be seen as early adapters of the (at the time still tentative and inchoate) unnatural frame. Still, as they were not perceived as such, we think it fitting to give them a separate treatment.

There is no such thing as a clearly defined postmodern narratology. This is not surprising, considering that the term “postmodern” is so vague and limitless that it can be used to denote an immense variety of things.⁶⁸⁵ Yet at the same time this is precisely the first characteristic of postmodern narratology: it combines classical elements with new insights without striving for a kind of higher synthesis. Such a synthesis would constitute a “metanarrative,” which has become an object of ridicule in postmodern thought.⁶⁸⁶

*First
characteristic:
no synthesis*

A good example of a narratological combination-without-synthesis can be found in Mark Currie’s *Postmodern Narrative Theory*.⁶⁸⁷ As we have explained in the section on cultural narratology, Currie bases his plea for an expansion of narratology to socio-narratology on the typ-

ically poststructuralist idea that everything is a narrative and a text. Lacanian psychoanalysis has shown that identity is a construction of language, historiography of the Hayden White school shows that history exists only as a plot and a story, and the postcolonial approach of theorists like Homi K. Bhabha interprets the nation-state as a narrative as well.⁶⁸⁸

According to Daniel Punday, the connection of the narrative text with social reality creates an interesting tension in postmodern narratology. On the one hand it breaks the text open by leaving room for context, including the social relationships and the subjective idiosyncrasies of reader and author. Punday argues that this makes the text more tangible: the story is embedded in the world of objects and subjects, things and bodies.⁶⁸⁹ This embedding diminishes the autonomy and thus also the power of the narrative text. On the other hand, this connection between text and reality also extends this power since the contextual elements (such as reader and body) can be grasped only as narratives. If this produces a new totality, a new kind of coherence between the textual story and extratextual history, it may result in a “post-deconstructive” integration of text and context.⁶⁹⁰

These notions have at least two drastic consequences for literary narratology. First, the study of a literary text is no longer limited to its so-called intrinsically literary aspects. It also concerns elements that are excluded from classical narratology: ideology, biography, social position, and so on. Second, the notion of narrative has become so broad that anything can be a narrative text, and nearly any form of representation can have a narrative character. A film, the Gulf War, the news, and the capitalist economy, to list only a few—are all considered narrative constructions.

*Second
characteristic:
no hierarchy*

The disadvantage of this theory is that it has no fixed methodology and is therefore very dependent on the insights and qualities of the individual narratologist. This is even more the case than in classical narratology, and it brings us to the second characteristic of postmodern narratology. Narrative theory too resembles a story, and this erases the boundaries between narrative text and narratology. This characteristic fits the typically postmodern combination of level (text) and metalevel (textual analysis), as well as its rejection of hierarchies. Andrew Gibson, for instance, argues in favor of a postmodern narrative the-

ory that no longer adheres to hierarchically separate levels like story, narrative, and narration. A narrative text is not like a house with clearly demarcated floors but more like a horizontal and often cluttered conglomerate of the most diverse narrative elements. The attitude of the classical narratologist who puts himself or herself above the text and dissects it into different layers is rejected in favor of “narrative laterality.”⁶⁹¹

Obviously, the classical distinction between text and interpretation cannot hold and the supposedly objective position of the metalevel is an illusion. But the postmodern combination of levels threatens to turn narratology into a very elusive undertaking. Currie rightly notes that the literary analyses of poststructuralists such as Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man are often very personal fabulations that do not contain any clearly applicable method.⁶⁹² However, the search for ambiguities, for places where the text contradicts itself and where the dualisms it posits turn in upon themselves, might be considered a methodology of sorts.

*Postmodern
methodology*

Postmodern narratologists might base their analyses of “Pegasian” on the story’s ambiguous representation of consciousness: sometimes we do not know who is thinking or uttering what sentence. Whereas structuralists would try to arrive at a decision by investigating other textual elements, postmodernists would say that the undecidability of the question is crucial to any story and particularly to this one: it shows how unimportant the differences between the two protagonists are. Whether you follow the rigid method of the riding master or the casual approach of the rider, “Whatever. As long as you take off.” The riding master is associated not just with the symbols of dressage such as the whip and the lesson but also with signifiers of freedom and elusiveness. The instructor talks about “a very special kind of wind” and “this heavenly sensation.” The contrast between riding master and rider is undermined because the master shares some aspects of the rider.

*Postmodern
narratology
and Mutsaers*

In “The Map” a similar approach might exploit the ambiguous relationship between “blind” and “all-seeing.” On the level of the text there is the antithesis between the shaded shop and the map it still reveals, despite the blinds. But what the boy learns to see in this way (“[a] whole table full of *new things*”) soon loses its value: the map is starting to fill up and is no longer worth seeing (“and one day I would remove the map from the wall”), hence the reference to “a blank map of

*Postmodern
narratology
and Krol*

the Netherlands”: that which supposedly provides new insight is itself a form of blindness. A postmodernist would no doubt extrapolate this insight to the metalevel as well. First, to the level of narration itself: the older first-person narrator pretends to know and see more than his younger self, but in fact his narration is captive to the same illusion as the boy’s bike trips. He thinks that he can map things, that he can see and survey his youth as it “really” was. Second, on the meta-level of interpretation: a postmodern or deconstructive reading is also a form of insight-through-blindness, blindness (among other things) to so many other facets of the story and to the inevitable blind spots in one’s own point of departure.⁶⁹³

*Third
characteristic:
monstrosity*

These short analyses clarify the third characteristic of postmodern narratology: it primarily pays attention to everything that does *not* fit into a neat system, anything that undermines itself. Following Foucault and Derrida, Gibson talks about the “monster,” an aggregate of elements that resist classification in any structure.⁶⁹⁴ That which is excluded by classical narratology becomes the center of attention. While classical narratology streamlines and tidies up narratives, the postmodern variety favors “savage narratives” that refuse to submit to the discipline of structuralist narrative theory.⁶⁹⁵

Monstrous time

What does the monster look like? What does not fit the classical paradigm but does find a place in the postmodern model? First of all, nonlinear time. Postmodern narrative analyses show a preference for textual passages that are hard to date or that go against the separation of past, present, and future. They prefer the chaotic swirl of time to the domesticated time of structuralist diagrams. Consequently, they reject the notion of a generally accepted temporal framework—the fabula or story—but assume instead that any literary text is crisscrossed by dozens of different time frames and scales.

Ursula K. Heise describes this situation with the term “chronoschisms,” referring specifically to “the incommensurability of different time scales.”⁶⁹⁶ However incommensurable they may be, in the postmodern experience of time they occur simultaneously. On the one hand there is the time that is fast and microscopic, the nanosecond, the immediacy of so-called real time, which characterizes not only computer technology but also the economic distribution of goods. On the other hand there is the slow and extended time of cosmology, which specu-

lates about millions of years and the Big Bang. The two time dimensions cross each other in many different ways and make it impossible to establish a primary and normative time scale.⁶⁹⁷ The mutually opposed times coalesce in an inextricable and contradictory present that Heise refers to as the “hyper-present” and that Joseph Francese calls the “continuous present.”⁶⁹⁸ In the same vein Punday describes postmodern time as a condensed and heterogeneous simultaneity without the modernist inclination toward the integration of contradictions.⁶⁹⁹ According to Elana Gomel, all of these monstrous time aspects are seen at their clearest in the genre of postmodern science fiction.⁷⁰⁰ She singles out “three main chronotopical categories of postmodern SF’s representation of temporality: time travel; alternate history; and apocalypse,” plus “three main postmodern timeshapes: determinism, contingency and End Time.”⁷⁰¹

Whereas structuralists attempt to systematize the various time scales in a literary text by connecting them with fixed points of reference such as the fabula, focalizers, or narrators, postmodern narratology focuses primarily on temporal elements of the text that make this kind of systematization impossible. This implies that postmodern narratologists do not believe in a primary, “real” time that can be reconstructed or in a stable subject giving sense and direction to that time.⁷⁰² Instead they point out that stories can never be reconstructions of the past, because there was no “real” event first and a narrative repetition afterward.⁷⁰³ Narrators who reconstruct themselves through their memories do not end up with their “real” or “original” selves but with yet another construction, another story about themselves.

In “The Map” the past is only reconstructed as a pretense. Its fixedness is clearly suggested by temporal indications in the first four paragraphs, until the boy gets hold of the map. Each paragraph starts with an exact temporal setting: “On Sundays the Christian shops had their shades drawn”; “This bookstore’s shades were drawn on Sundays”; “Monday afternoon, in the bookshop”; and “That Saturday . . . At one thirty I brought it home with me.” From then on, the temporal indications become more vague, revealing the illusion of mapping. The map makes everything hazy. The distance between then and now is obscured as well: the final paragraph constantly shuttles back and forth between the moment of the bike trips, an unspecified moment some

time later (“one day”), and the present time (“I haven’t kept it either”). There is no genuine reconstruction here.

Time of analysis

The paradoxical simultaneity of different time scales is not limited to the literary text. It is also part of the context, or, more precisely, it only arises in the interaction with that context. The context refers not only to social reality, which combines the most diverse time scales, but also to the actual reading experience. Narratologists who read and analyze a text read traces of other passages in every passage, as well as traces of their own temporal concepts. The traditional narratological reconstruction of a single temporal evolution in a story or a novel is an extreme simplification, which is blind to its own background. It is established after numerous readings, and the earlier readings resonate in every new reading. This resonance disrupts linear evolution because the narratologist reads each passage with the previous and the following passages in mind.⁷⁰⁴ Thus, heterogeneous simultaneity and the “hyper-present” also play a role at the level of analysis. It follows that the “real” temporal evolution of a narrative text can never be reconstructed and certainly not via a traditional straightforward development.

*Monstrous
causality*

Monstrous space

The collapse of linear time also entails a far-reaching relativization of causality, which is after all closely linked with the linear succession of two moments: cause and effect. Spatial setting is relativized in the same way. A linear notion of time sees evolution as a line between two or more points—in other words, as movement in a clearly definable space. From that perspective, classical narratology represents the space of the text in anthropomorphous, almost Euclidean terms that require fixed centers and calibrations. Postmodern narratology, on the other hand, proceeds from a space that is in constant motion and has no established centers.⁷⁰⁵ Space is motion, “the ongoing transformation of one space into another.”⁷⁰⁶ This chaos of different time scales has its spatial counterpart in the uncentered web, the labyrinth, or the rhizome.⁷⁰⁷

In the postmodern description of narrative space, the terms “multiplicity” and “metamorphosis” pop up time and again. Francese, for instance, characterizes postmodern space as a form of “multiperspectivism” and a “flux.”⁷⁰⁸ Punday relates “spatial multiplicity” to “alterity.”⁷⁰⁹ The latter term refers to the fact that space can never be defined

in terms of its own characteristics and coordinates, because the definition depends on reference to other spaces. Punday argues that the space of a particular narrative passage cannot be reduced to the description of the setting. Instead it should be seen as an entanglement, because the setting refers to the setting of other narrative passages, to the reader's spatial conceptions, and to the narratives that are attached to that setting in social reality.⁷¹⁰

Adding a psychoanalytic touch to this, Andrew Hock-soon Ng studies postmodern "monstrous space" as the intermingling of space, time, and body that also involves a narrative emergence of the unconscious: "My argument is that the living environment—be it a city or an apartment block—can host aspects of the unconscious which, in certain situations, can be [*sic*] re-surface to haunt its inhabitants."⁷¹¹ This implies a refusal of linear time (even of death) and of realist architecture in the "architectural uncanny."⁷¹² The result is a narrative representation of the void that has become the postmodern self: "Here, lived space takes on a monstrous reality of the repressed returning, bringing to the fore deep, dismal secrets of the self."⁷¹³

Postmodern narratologists do not establish temporal or spatial axes in order to situate the events of a story. They consider the act of situating to be a misunderstanding because of its anthropomorphous and referentialist connection of the text with everyday human reality. The reader of "The Map" and "Pegasian" hardly ever gains a solid foothold in the spatial setting. The space that he or she reconstructs changes constantly and resists unambiguous and invariable representation. Those kinds of representations belong to classical structuralist narratology rather than to the narrative text itself.

Nevertheless, the "text itself" remains out of reach for postmodern narratologists as well. Regardless of the extent to which structured time-space may be a structuralist construct, the dynamic and multiperspectivist time-space of postmodern theoreticians is no less of a construct. Their starting points and preferences naturally color their analyses. There is a difference, however. Structuralists look for so-called objective analyses, for verifiable interpretations that are suggested by the text itself. That is why they downplay the narratologist's subjective preferences, prejudices, and views. Postmodern narratologists, on the other hand, make their own points of departure explic-

it, insofar as this is possible. We use the term “point of departure” because it indicates that this bias is often theorized by means of spatial imagery: it is about the narratologists’ position, the place from which they analyze the narrative.

Space of analysis

In this connection Punday talks about the narratologist’s situatedness. This is not a fixed point but an interaction. The analysis of a narrative text generates an interchange between literary clichés pertaining to the text (such as patterns of setting and narrative strategy) and interpretive habits. At the spatiotemporal level, this interaction links the textual setting to the extratextual space and time, which is referred to as “site.”⁷¹⁴ Readers constantly oscillate between text and site, and that is why they can never grasp the spatiotemporal setting as it would exist in the narrative itself.⁷¹⁵ Inevitably, the act of analysis will always be colored by narratives that precede the analyzed text and that resonate in the form of literary clichés and interpretive habits.

Time and space, therefore, are not compelling characteristics of the literary text: they are constructs on the borderline between text and context. This context is often identified as postmodernity, and its characteristics are usually found in sociological and economic analyses.⁷¹⁶ The fragmented and multiperspectivist time-space of postmodernism is, for instance, related to the contemporary, late-capitalist means of production. David Harvey studies postmodern narrative time-space from the perspective of the accelerated mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption,⁷¹⁷ thereby following in the footsteps of authors such as Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, and Jean-François Lyotard.⁷¹⁸ Such contextualizations of the postmodern text and textual analysis often point out that traditional spatiotemporal footholds are disappearing. This results from the increasing importance of non-real time-spaces such as the internet and from the growing fetishization of objects that lose their clear position in the production process and are consumed as self-contained entities.

*Monstrous
paraphrase*

Let us return to the literary text. The monstrous characteristics covered so far all relate to what is traditionally called narrative content: time, space, causal logic. A second monstrous aspect is connected with narration and concerns nonparaphrasability. Classical narratology assumes that narrative elements can be paraphrased and translated into theoretical terminology without destroying what is crucial to the text.

To postmodern narratology, any paraphrase necessarily amounts to a disruption. This ties in with our earlier observation: postmodern narratology sticks so closely to the story that it threatens to become a narrative itself.

The distrust of paraphrase is linked to another central postmodern concern: the close attention to imagery—that is, metaphor and metonymy. Metaphors can never be put in other words; they resist any kind of paraphrase, hence the considerable attention poststructuralists have devoted to metaphor.⁷¹⁹ A well-known example is Lacan's analysis of a metaphor taken from the story "Berenice," by Edgar Allan Poe. Egaeus, the protagonist, is convinced that Berenice's teeth are ideas.⁷²⁰ This metaphorical connection between teeth and ideas can never be paraphrased or exhaustively described. Yet the metaphor is crucial to the story, which shows how the protagonist's obsession (i.e., fixed *idea*) leads him to dig up the apparently dead Berenice and extract her *teeth*. The dynamics and specificity of the story lie in its imagery or, more precisely, in the interaction between metaphor and metonymy. In psychoanalysis, teeth are metonymically connected with the vagina (as body parts they are literally part of the same whole) and ideas are metonymically linked with fears and delusions. The metaphorical connection between teeth and ideas thus refers, via a metonymic shift, to the vagina and fear—that is, to castration anxiety, which in its turn is a metaphorical combination of body and mind.⁷²¹

*Monstrous
imagery*

The central metaphor in "Pegasian" is that of the muse turned horse, Pegasus. The question is how this horse can "take wing," how the muse can lift humankind. Does this happen through dressage? By putting on the right clothes? Or out of the blue, suddenly, whenever the horse feels like it? The whole story is an unfurling of images related to the horse: riding breeches, horseback riding, the carousel, cavalry, and so on. A structuralist approach would try to classify these images in order to obtain a clear answer to the questions posed. Postmodern narratology, by contrast, would show how the images affect and enrich each other, precluding any unambiguous answer. It remains an open question: is there a right way to reach the goal—to go up in the air?

*Monstrous
metaphors
in Mutsaers
and Krol*

This openness surfaces in the discussion between the riding master and the rider. The problem is put in terms of metonymic images, which present parts of a larger whole. The flaps of the riding breeches

(as parts of the rider), for instance, are supposedly necessary to reach the goal. The books on cavalry and the background information are parts of the lesson, and the fat that would take the place of fat ladies' riding breeches is part of the body. These elements all refer to the right method in a figurative or indirect way. But they also slow down the story and the lesson. This effect is expressed by means of a new metaphor: "These horses are moving around like turtles."

The end of the story combines the metonyms with the metaphors, which leads to insight and understanding: "Finally she understands: the riding breeches give the horse wings, and the horse gives those wings to you." The riding breeches are a metonymic part of the rider but become metaphors for the horse's wings. In turn these wings become a part of the rider, allowing her to go up in the air. In other words, the alternation of metaphors and metonyms makes it possible to get off the ground. This can in turn be read as a statement on writing itself: inspiration—metaphorically expressed by the horse Pegasus, which stands for the muse—is a process in which one image leads to another. This results in a flux, a creative rush. In the text this is the moment when horse and rider go up in the air, which is not a moment of synthesis or choice between the disciplined approach of the riding master and the flexible approach of the rider: "Whatever. As long as you take off."

A similar point can be made about "The Map," which develops the central metaphor of mapping in a variety of related images: the blank map, the earth being covered, the map getting so crammed that it does not show anything anymore. Again, there is no obvious conclusion, but an incongruity shows up instead: the more roads the boy maps, the less they mean to him. As soon as something is mapped, it ceases to hold any interest; truly interesting things do not appear on maps and cannot be represented in such a straightforward fashion.

In these cases, the metaphor does *not* create a dialectical synthesis or a higher integration of opposites. On the contrary, it is the icon par excellence of a "cultural schizophrenia" that is never resolved.⁷²² It connects different domains without ever reconciling them and is thus in tune with the contradictions that have come to be considered typical of the "cultural logic of late capitalism."⁷²³ Thus, metaphor initiates the step from textual to contextual analysis. The interaction between the parts of a metaphor is in itself limitless. It becomes even

more endless through the interplay with other metaphors in the text and through contact with the context. Narratological analysis therefore always remains unfinished.

The extent to which postmodern analysis still makes use of classical terminology varies with each writer. With a little goodwill, one could discern a continuum from near-total rejection to adaptation and cautious acceptance. The left end of the spectrum is taken up by the most combative brand of postmodern narratology, one that leaves behind classical terminology like *focalizer* and *heterodiegesis* and uses a new arsenal of jargon referring to imagery, contradiction, and the broader cultural implications of the text. One example is Gibson's theory, which explicitly and extensively explains why classical notions will not do, while introducing a terminology of its own. Less negative about classical theory is Mark Currie, who continues to use a number of fundamental classical concepts without clarification while at the same time explicitly resisting the presuppositions that underlie them.

*Traces of
classical
narratology*

At the right end of the spectrum we find moderate postmodern narratologists like Patrick O'Neill, who retains nearly all the fundamental concepts of Genette, Bal, and Rimmon-Kenan but expands and makes them more flexible in order to make them better suited to typically postmodern concerns such as instability and the paradoxical combination of contradictory textual elements. O'Neill enhances the classical triad of story, narrative, and narration with a fourth level—textuality—which connects the narrative text with its communicative context, that is, its author and reader.⁷²⁴ He studies these four levels using possible world theory combined with rudimentary game theory. Both the literary text and narratology are games that make up and at the same time relativize their own rules. This mostly takes place through a confrontation of different rules and players: a text is never one single game and can never be played by a single agent. This is why O'Neill replaces the one-sided structuralist terminology with concepts that refer to composite entities. He replaces the notion of the narrator, for example, with that of a composite, polyphonic narration that he calls "compound discourse."⁷²⁵

We feel that a complete rejection of structuralist terminology does more harm than good. Terms such as "focalization" and "consciousness representation" may cause a lot of problems, but at the same time

*Integrating
classical and
postmodern*

they clarify things that would otherwise remain obscure. Moreover, it is an illusion to think that the new concepts proposed by narratologists like Gibson are free of such pitfalls. When Gibson talks about the laterality and monstrosity of a text, he is still using problematic notions. Even though spatial conceptualization is rejected by postmodernists, laterality is obviously a spatial concept. Furthermore, Gibson falls prey to an anthropomorphous view since he regards the monstrous as the nonhuman. These terms are in fact metaphors and therefore make use of the processes they are meant to study. This is not exactly a way out of the structuralist traps. What is more, the introduction of new terminology does not always lead to drastically different interpretations of narrative texts. Gibson sometimes reverts to precisely the structuralist terminology and methodology he seeks to avoid.⁷²⁶

4.2. *Natural Narratology*

Whereas postmodern narratology homes in on the “monstrous” deviations that set literary fiction apart from everyday narratives (especially in terms of time, space, and body), natural narratology, proposed in 1996 by Monika Fludernik, starts from the opposite position—that is, a continuity between fictional and everyday, oral storytelling.⁷²⁷ Postmodern narratology celebrates the undecidable and the ungraspable aspects of narratives, whereas Fludernik investigates the ways in which readers grasp what may at first seem baffling to them.

As she explains, her position is influenced by three traditions. The first is “discourse analysis in the Labovian tradition” and more specifically Labov’s work on “natural narratives,” that is, “unelicited conversational storytelling.”⁷²⁸ A second source of inspiration is a brand of (Austrian) cognitive linguistics that focuses on embodiment and experience as crucial ways to make sense of the world, including narratives.⁷²⁹ The final reference is to Jonathan Culler’s “naturalization,” a term he introduced in 1975 “to account for readers’ interpretative strategies when confronting textual or semantic inconsistencies.”⁷³⁰ Fludernik quotes Culler: “The strange, the formal, the fictional, must be recuperated or naturalized, brought within our ken, if we do not want to remain gaping before monumental inscriptions.”⁷³¹ Following these sources, Fludernik aligns literary with natural storytelling, zooms in on the (embodied) experiential processing of narratives, and claims

that the interpretive process is basically a way of turning the strange into the natural.

The process of translating the unknown into the known involves four levels. Every level has its own type of frame used to process the narrative on offer. The first one employs frames taken from “real-life experience”: “On this level are situated the core schemata from frame theory, which accommodate presupposed understandings of agency, goals, intellection, emotions, motivation, and so on.”⁷³² The second level mobilizes frames that are more specifically narrative. Four aspects enable the interpreter to gain access to the narrative: telling, viewing, experiencing, and acting. For instance, to come to grips with the story, one might focus on the actions or on the experiences, or on any combination of the different aspects. The third level “comprises well-known naturally recurring story-telling situations.”⁷³³ These are (proto)typical scripts and genres known to the reader. A narrative that begins with a grotesque character and a futuristic setting will mobilize other generic frames and prototypes than a realist beginning will. Finally, the fourth level makes use of all the previous ones to naturalize (in Culler’s sense) the narrative. Fludernik calls this the level of “narrativization.”⁷³⁴

Four levels

Crucial in the process of narrativization is the experiencing frame or, in terms of narrative processing, experientiality. Whereas the term “experience” may be used without any idea of narrative or storytelling, Fludernik’s “experientiality” is always linked with narrativization—that is, with the last of the four levels just discussed.⁷³⁵ Even if a narrative fails to make sense on the level of viewing, telling, and action, the reader (or listener) may use the experiences described and evoked by the story to come to terms with it: “narrativity is a function of narrative texts and centres on experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature.”⁷³⁶ When a reader can discern an experiencing and human-like figure, he or she will be able to come to terms with the text as a narrative. Obviously this is not an “all or nothing” position, but a matter of degree: different narratives have different degrees of experientiality.⁷³⁷ As with most (even all) of the postclassical narratologies we have dealt with so far, the reader remains an abstract and idealized figure in Fludernik’s theory, as she herself freely admits in a response to Maria Mäkelä’s analysis of the reader in *Towards a “Natural” Narratology*.⁷³⁸

Experientiality

The fundamental nature of experientiality leads Fludernik to reject the traditional idea that “sequentiality and logical connectedness” are basic conditions of narratives.⁷³⁹ Actions also are not central: “existence takes priority over action parameters, rather than treating consciousness as an incidental side effect of human action.”⁷⁴⁰ Even realist and clearly delineated characters are not essential, because experience takes priority over the experiencing agent. What is vital is an embodied form of consciousness: “The feature that is, however, most basic to experientiality is embodiment rather than specificity or individuality because these can in fact be subsumed under it.”⁷⁴¹ The structuralist three-tier model (of story, narrative, and narration) and Stanzel’s dichotomy of narrator and reflector both prioritized the narrating agent. Fludernik reverses this and turns embodied consciousness into the central aspect of narrativity and narrativization.

*Story, narrative,
narration*

This reversal implies that the traditional distinction between story on the one hand and narrative plus narration on the other is by no means as absolute as many narratologists think. The distinction is largely based on a realist conception of narration that stipulates that an event precedes its representation. However, it is extremely difficult to isolate an event from the way in which it is represented. As Fludernik no longer defines the narrative text by linking it to a sequence of facts, she does not need to look for the “real story” or the bias involved in representation. In this way she puts into perspective the eccentricity of many twentieth-century texts in which hardly anything happens. These are only eccentric for classical narratologists who cling to the story as a norm.

Of course the conceptualization of the story remains useful as one of the realist parameters to read a text. When a narrator describes events from the past, the reader will “naturally” be inclined to read his report as the representation of successive events. This merely demonstrates, however, that classical narratological theories are based on a realist frame. It therefore seems inevitable that they interpret texts on the basis of anthropomorphic and psychologizing concepts. This insight need not undermine the theory, but it does stimulate reflection on the structuralist concepts, even when dealing with an extremely simple text that fully allows realist projection. According to Fludernik, anthropomorphization is not a problem in itself, because it constitutes the essence of processing narrative text.

Narrativization is not just a process that a particular reader uses at a given moment in time. It is also a dynamic process, a series of changing ways of reading. What readers used when narrativizing stories in the eighteenth century is different from what we use today. The Russian formalists showed that what was defamiliarizing in one period may become familiar in another.⁷⁴² Hans-Georg Gadamer demonstrated how a rupture between the textual “horizon of expectation” and the readerly horizon might evolve into a fusion.⁷⁴³ Along the same lines Fludernik underscores the importance of diachrony, saying that narrativization can “ultimately feed into diachronic change, in the incorporation of new options into the realm of familiar genres or discourse types.”⁷⁴⁴ It sometimes looks as if the history of reading showed an ever-increasing faculty to turn the strange into the familiar.⁷⁴⁵

*Synchrony,
diachrony*

To be fair, Fludernik has always recognized that some texts remain hard to narrativize and that, more generally, narrativization may continue to fail. In a reply to Jonathan Culler, who had asked whether narrativization always succeeds, Fludernik clarifies first that some texts (such as the “Ithaca” chapter in Joyce’s *Ulysses*) remain problematic and, second, that narrativization need not solve all the problems.⁷⁴⁶ It is not a final and restless solution of narrative riddles. Like fictionality, narrativity and narrativization are scalar: “narrativity is now conceived of as scalar, with minimal experientiality (only action report) for many factual narratives and for oral small stories [. . .] and increasing levels of experientiality towards the other end of the scale, where fiction and conversational stories hold pride of place.”⁷⁴⁷ The extent to which these scales go together with diachronic evolutions is one of the topics Fludernik wants to investigate and, as we explained earlier, one of the more central issues in present-day narratology.⁷⁴⁸

In “Pegasian” nothing much happens, but because of its orientation toward human experience, readers will inevitably interpret it as a story. The two characters feel strongly about the topic of the conversation, and the narrator makes an effort to dramatize this involvement by using free indirect speech. The narrator remains in the background but, as we have suggested before, is not neutral either. The narrator’s manipulative representation of the characters’ thoughts and utterances may lead the reader to develop a negative or positive view of either of these figures.

*Fludernik and
Mutsaers*

Even if the thoughts and utterances may blend in refined ways, readers will face few problems in interpreting this text. They recognize a conversation and connect it with everyday, natural conversations. The application of real-life parameters (Fludernik's first level) would probably be easier without the confusing use of free indirect speech, but the circumstances of the conversation become clear rather quickly. A riding master and a girl are talking to each other in a riding school. The real-life frames Fludernik proposes can easily be detected: there is a purpose and an intention to the lesson, and both characters seem to know quite well what they want to obtain.

The prototypical situation of the lesson (a frame of Fludernik's third level) underlies and naturalizes these goals. After a small time lapse at the end of the first part, the girl has an insight while riding. This insight may be a little unexpected, certainly considering the girl's stubborn resistance earlier, but as a positive and clear ending to the story, it perfectly fits the expectations of readers with realist tendencies. In a didactic frame one or more characters undergo an evolution that is nicely wrapped up at the end of the story.

*Fludernik
and Krol*

At first "The Map" seems to invoke real-life frames even more than "Pegasian" does. Krol's narrator clearly tells his story in retrospect, and the importance of the map makes it possible to see a clear distinction between "authentic" reality and its cartographic representation. As he gets older, the narrator's emotional attachment to the map diminishes, but this does not prevent him from devoting a separate narration to this object.

This paradox may be an obstacle to readers using real-life parameters. It may lead readers to focus on the experientiality of the narrator. Does he claim that he no longer considers the map to be important, or does he suggest that the map exerts a permanent influence on him? Is there a clear distinction between present and past? Is "authentic" reality not as artificial as the reality of the map? Is this map really so irrelevant, given the fact that the narrator devotes an entire story to it? Since "The Map" does not fully correspond to the average reader's expectations, this story, more than "Pegasian," seems to resist everyday framing. In both cases, however, the text has a relatively unexpected ending that may raise all kinds of additional questions with respect to, for instance, the narrator's attitude. In responding to these ques-

tions, readers will undoubtedly be drawn into the game. The answers will be colored by their ideology, their views on possibility and actuality, their frames and scripts, and their knowledge of natural narratives. The discussion between Fludernik and unnatural narratology revolves around the “right” ways to answer these questions.

4.3. *Unnatural Narratology*

Unnatural narratology started around the year 2000 with the work of Brian Richardson, who collected his investigations of unnatural narratives in his 2006 study *Unnatural Voices*. The approach quickly attracted a group of young scholars who focused on unusual fiction and questioned the usual narratological concepts. Among them were Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, Maria Mäkelä, and Henrik Skov Nielsen.

The term “unnatural” obviously alludes to Monika Fludernik’s “natural narratology.” The antagonistic terminology and the main differences between the two approaches were clearly outlined in 2010 in a joint article by Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson.⁷⁴⁹ In their view, classical and natural narratology are guilty of “mimetic reductionism.”⁷⁵⁰ They “have a clear mimetic bias and take ordinary realist texts or ‘natural’ narratives as being prototypical manifestations of narrative. [. . .] What we want to highlight by means of the notion of the unnatural is the fact that narratives are also full of unnatural elements. Many narratives defy, flaunt, mock, play, and experiment with some (or all) of these core assumptions about narrative.”⁷⁵¹ Alber and his colleagues point to three forms of unnaturalness, or three domains in which narratives may defy mimetic conventions: unnatural story-worlds (in which impossible things happen), unnatural minds (e.g., an omniscient character or a character who knows he or she is being narrated by someone else), and unnatural acts of narration (e.g., Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” in which “the heart is not only a tell-tale heart but also a tale-telling one”⁷⁵²).

These three levels may seem clear-cut at first sight, but which aspects may count as “unnatural” is not easy to decide. As with the term “natural,” the exact meaning of “unnatural” seems to fluctuate. It is always related to what deviates from “normal” narratives, but the precise nature of that deviation differs from one unnatural narratologist to another. Jan Alber “restricts the use of the term *unnatural* to physically,

*Unnatural
versus natural*

*Unnatural
versus
unnatural*

logically, and humanly impossible scenarios and events (regardless of whether we find them estranging or not).⁷⁵³ So a science fiction narrative in which human beings turn into animals would be considered unnatural. Brian Richardson would call such a narrative “nonmimetic”: it does not follow realist conventions, but it obeys other (generic) conventions, and when one uses these conventions, the narrative can be naturalized. The narrated transformation is not unusual in science fiction. It has become “conventionalized.” For a narrative to be “unnatural” in the eyes of Richardson, it must be “antimimetic,” that is, “unconventionalized”: “By *antimimetic*, I mean representations that contravene the presuppositions of nonfictional narratives, violate mimetic expectations and the practices of realism, and defy the conventions of existing, established genres.”⁷⁵⁴

The terminology is further complicated by the views of the other two unnatural narratologists involved in the 2010 manifesto by Alber et al. Stefan Iversen “ties the notion of the ‘unnatural’ to narratives that present the reader with clashes between the rules governing a storyworld and scenarios or events producing or taking place inside this storyworld, clashes that defy easy explanations.” Henrik Skov Nielsen “defines unnatural narratives as a subset of fictional narratives that—unlike many realist and mimetic narratives—cue the reader to employ interpretational strategies that are different from those she employs in non-fictionalized, conversational storytelling situations.”⁷⁵⁵

*Reader and
history*

As is the case with Fludernik’s approach, the reader and the diachronic dimension come to the fore in the work of the “unnaturals” as well. What is considered antimimetic and unconventionalized varies from reader to reader and from period to period. To decide what is “physically, logically, and humanly impossible,” Jan Alber adopts the stance of a typical Western reader: “I should emphasize that in this study I assume the position of a contemporary and neurotypical reader who has a rationalist-scientific and empirically minded worldview.”⁷⁵⁶ Again, there is no empirical testing. The reader may be central, but he or she remains an abstract entity.

In her reaction to the joint 2010 essay by Alber et al., Fludernik even restricts (partly or completely—that remains unclear) the unnatural to clearly delineated historical periods and narrative forms. First, there are the “pre-eighteenth-century narratives,” especially “the discourse

of fable, romance, before-the-novel narrative.” Second, there is “the discourse of postmodernist anti-illusionism, transgression, and meta-fiction.”⁷⁵⁷ In their reply Alber et al. reject this historical reduction and claim that unnatural elements have always been present, from the simplest and earliest forms of narratives to the most complex present-day incarnations.⁷⁵⁸ Moreover, limiting the unnatural to genres such as the fable and the postmodern novel would go against Richardson’s idea of the unnatural as the unconventionalized narrative, unrelated to generic forms of naturalization.

In general, unnatural narratology shows that even so-called conventional narratives contain a lot of odd and unwieldy elements. Maria Mäkelä, for instance, uncovers “the unnatural and the distorted essence of literary perception in realism through a couple of examples from Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Leo Tolstoy.”⁷⁵⁹ The narratives are filled with excessive and overly detailed descriptions, which are not motivated in the traditional sense (that is, by story logic or psychology) and not clearly anchored in a center of perception or “experientiality.” They destabilize narrative progression and produce a grotesque effect. “From this perspective,” Mäkelä concludes, “realism would seem to be more an art of distortion than reproduction.”⁷⁶⁰

Apart from the terminological problem—the definition of “unnatural”—there is a methodological difficulty: how do you approach the so-called unapproachable narrative aspects? In theory, unnatural narratology points to narrative elements that resist interpretation and naturalization, but even so, it tries to make sense of these strange elements. Fludernik first commends unnatural narratology: “one of the most appealing features of ‘unnatural’ narratology is its avowed desire to preserve the oddity of the strange and illogical in otherwise realistic texts.”⁷⁶¹ But then she demonstrates that the readings by Richardson et al. do not preserve the oddity as they make sense of it, quite regularly by linking the strange elements to genres, themes, or psychology. For instance, the interpretation of Robert Coover’s story “The Babysitter” makes sense of the nonsensical: “by explaining some of the possible rationales of Coover’s story, they in fact introduce a familiarization of the unnatural within a well-known postmodernist framework.”⁷⁶²

This general methodological problem is solved—or at least confronted—in different ways by different unnatural narratologists.

*Naturalizing
the unnatural*

*Unnatural
methods*

One might place the various solutions on a continuum that begins on the left side with an avowed noninterference (that is, leave the unfamiliar as it is) and ends on the right side, with an almost Fludernik-like attempt to come to terms with the strange elements. The first option is Richardson's (and by and large also Iversen's and Nielsen's); the second one is Alber's. The latter outlines nine reading strategies to make sense of what seems incomprehensible in narratives: frame blending, generification (using genre conventions to make sense of the unnatural), subjectification (reading the unnatural as a representation of "internal states"), thematic foregrounding, allegorical reading, satirical and parodic interpretation, using transcendental realms to explain the unnatural, turning the text into your own story, and, finally, "the Zen way of reading," which comes closest to Richardson's respect for the power of the unnatural.⁷⁶³ In his readings Alber always points to a number of these cognitive strategies, and he does so on the basis of his own (rationally informed) ways of reading. In the end he turns unnatural narratives into texts addressing the "human interest question."⁷⁶⁴ To him, such a narrative "is always part of a purposeful and meaningful communicative act."⁷⁶⁵

Although Richardson also points to the pragmatic, social, and cultural value of antimimetic narratives,⁷⁶⁶ he repeatedly states that he wants to leave the unnatural as it is. For instance: "We must instead respect the polysemy of literary creations, and a crucial aspect of this polysemy can be the unnatural construction of recalcitrant texts. We need to recognize the anti-mimetic as such, and resist impulses to deny its protean essence and unexpected effects."⁷⁶⁷ Obviously, this can never be fully realized, as any interpretation transforms the narrative elements under discussion. Still, Richardson advocates a "resistance to interpretive recuperation," which acknowledges strategies of sense-making but refuses to reduce the narrative to those strategies: "we should recognize the hints of allegory, the thematic associations, the suggestions of fantasy or dreamlike events, the parody of ordinary human interactions—but not reduce the unnatural elements to one or two of these other aspects in an effort to place the entire work safely within a single totalizing interpretation."⁷⁶⁸

*Against
totalization*

The negative connotation of the term "totalizing" can be found in all forms of unnatural narratology. The new approach presents itself

as a complement, not as a replacement for existing theories and certainly not as a new master theory that would be able to deal with all narrative texts. Alber et al. defend a “dialectical view: most narratives can adequately be described in terms of the permanent interaction between the natural on the one hand and the unnatural on the other.”⁷⁶⁹ This form of dialectics on the level of the method fits in with the dual nature of narratives. Richardson advocates “a dual or oscillating conception of narratives, one mimetic, the other antimimetic. Most narrative theorists advocate a single theory of narrative that can be applied to all narratives, fictional and nonfictional. To me, this aspiration is quixotic.”⁷⁷⁰

That is why Richardson uses existing narratological concepts, such as *fabula* and *syuzhet*, and then opens them up to include the antimimetic dimensions of unnatural narratives. He thus arrives at “infinite *fabulas*,” “denarrated *fabulas*” (the refutation of what has been told before), and “entirely variable *syuzhet* patterns.”⁷⁷¹ As he uses classical narratology and at the same time shows how a text undermines its application, Richardson is happy to be called a “dual-level-reader,” that is, “one who perceives the generic system or otherwise conventional framework *and* enjoys the antimimetic assaults on those conventions.”⁷⁷²

Combining this unnatural narratological toolbox with the three unnatural levels mentioned by Alber et al. in 2010, one might propose a methodology that focuses on oddities in the storyworld, on the kind of consciousness (or “experientiality”), and on the sort of narration. Taken together, these levels would shed new light on the *syuzhet* and the *fabula* (e.g., is it natural? can it be reconstructed at all?) and would enable the reader to decide if the narrative is nonmimetic or antimimetic. This is just the first methodological phase, which may be called “diagnostic,” in that it lists the unfamiliar elements in the narrative. The question of what is to be done with these strange elements is part of a second analytical step. In both phases the reader plays a decisive role: he or she decides what is odd and what is to be done about it. As we saw, Mäkelä points to the disproportionate and excessive narration in classical realism, but some readers may find these detailed descriptions part and parcel of conventional realism.

In Wasco’s “City” the reader may find the narrative typical of science fiction, in which case he or she zooms in on the conventionalized,

Unnatural city

nonmimetic elements. Staples of science fiction are the flying saucer, the futuristic urban environment, and the reconnaissance trip. The emptiness of the city might be naturalized by linking it to postapocalyptic or posthuman genres. In Alber's terms the reader uses (and up to a point blends) genre conventions to make sense of the nonmimetic storyworld. In addition, he or she might read this as a satirical expression of the inhumane contemporary city or as a presentation of a theme (e.g., the uninhabitable city).

On the other hand, one might look for odd elements that can hardly be naturalized. For instance, the setting of the storyworld contains incongruities that remain riddles even when they are linked to generic frames, social satire, or themes. For one, the setting seems to do away with the spatial logic of high and low, in and out. There are holes in the ground, and out of one of these holes (in panel nineteen) a spire protrudes. The ground does not really seem to be the ground anymore. "Low" becomes "high." It is often impossible to decide if a sidewalk is down on the ground or up in the air, as can be seen in panels six and eight. Similarly, "in" and "out" seem to be mixed. For instance, one may wonder if panel twelve shows an outdoor urban scene or a large room in a museum. In the first case, one might ask why the road is covered with sharp, tower-like objects that make driving impossible. In the second case, one might wonder about the difference between a city and a museum.

The closer one looks, the more oddities one discovers. That in itself is a major contribution of unnatural narratology. It is an essential correction of theories—such as classical structuralism—that aim for a complete systematization and disregard elements that may unhinge the system. It is also a welcome reminder of the unique qualities of narratives, which cannot be reduced to theories, no matter how totalizing or relativistic these are. Even if one were to use all the theories proposed in this handbook, narratives and readers would still have the final word.

Appendix A

“Pegasian”

CHARLOTTE MUTSAERS

The riding master would appreciate it if she'd remember that when horse riding you might best be wearing a real pair of riding breeches, those with side flaps.

She asks why, since a simple straightforward denim pair works well too. What are those flaps for, in fact?

The riding master answers that you catch a very special kind of wind in them.

Do they make you go faster?

No, not faster—as a matter of fact, true dressage, just like real life, doesn't have anything to do with racing—it's rather the sensation that matters. Little girls who have never personally experienced this heavenly sensation did well not to shoot off their mouths. And it wouldn't hurt to consult a few books on cavalry. Horse riding without background information doesn't make sense for anyone. And this here is no club for amateurs.

And the women who wear their own riding breeches, in the form of fat, can they perhaps ride like that?

Now the riding master doesn't feel like explaining anything anymore. Sometimes your patience simply runs out. Furthermore, all this questioning ruins the class, notably for the other ladies. These horses are moving around like turtles. Time to bring out the whip.

When the carousel is back in full swing, she hears the rustle of the riding breeches over the cracking of the whip. Finally she understands: the riding breeches give the horse wings, and the horse gives those wings to you. Is it the idea or is it the sensation? Whatever. As long as you take off.

Appendix B

"The Map"

GERRIT KROL

On Sundays the Christian shops had their shades drawn. Their windows would be hidden by shades, mostly of light-brown paper, so that people would not be seduced on Sunday to return and buy something on Monday. On the corner of little Brouwerstreet and Ebbingestreet, for instance, you had the Paalman bookshop. It wasn't any bigger than a large living room. There was a counter behind which ("he's nice, she's wearing the pants") Mr. and Mrs. Paalman operated as if it were a grocery store. The shop was especially busy toward the feast of Saint Nicholas. One waited one's turn, and when it was finally there, one uttered one's wishes, in the manner of "a light novel for a girl of seventeen" or "a historical novel, preferably illustrated," and then racks and piles would be searched for such a book. It was found, opened on the first page, and shown to the customer who, with his glasses on, would read the title, the name of the author, and the publishing house; then he would take off his glasses and nod the way one approves of a wine in a restaurant.

This bookstore's shades were drawn on Sundays. Closed off from the world. But one of these Sundays, on my way to the children's church, I saw, because the shades didn't close completely (they had stuck somewhere, leaving a mere two-inch gap), precisely in those two forbidden inches part of a folded tourist map or biking map that, perhaps because of the Sunday light, had slightly curled so that, on my haunches now, I could be surprised by the degree of detail and especially by the name I read: Dorkwerd. The village I knew so well and that I had never seen on a map! And farther to the right the northern part, indicated with red, of the city of Groningen: the Heights and a small

stretch of railroad track, the New Canal and the bike path alongside. Everything clear and close, everything enlarged. Never had I seen such a map, with such minute detail.

Monday afternoon, in the bookshop, I pointed to it. I did not have enough money, so that I had to wait until Saturday.

That Saturday . . . At one thirty I brought it home with me and opened it on the table.

“Even the stoneworks are on it,” I cried out, moved as I was.

A whole table full of *new things*. Later that afternoon I sat on the floor with it on my knees in front of the stove. What excited me was the thought that it now made sense *to have been everywhere*. The prospect I was going to cover the earth with my body. To be everywhere . . .

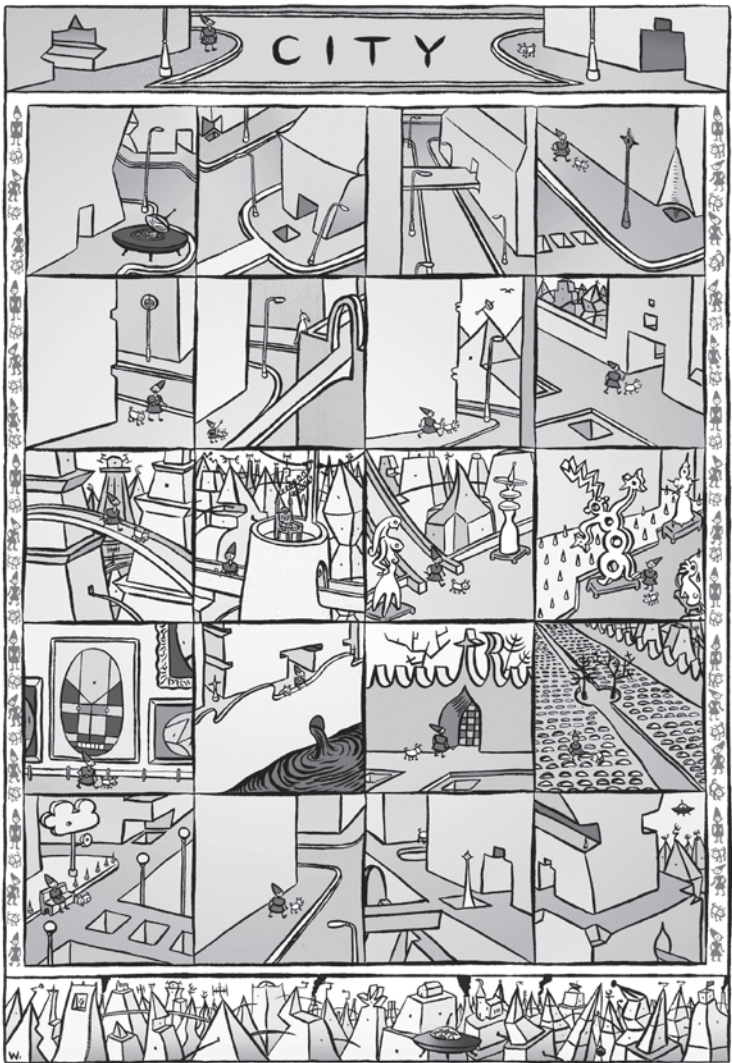
The feeling didn’t go away. On the contrary. I had drawn a blank map of the Netherlands and indicated the roads where I had biked; and the roads I had not had yet, that is where I went, I biked them so that I could draw them. Some roads (and the number increased) I traveled two times or more, but this did not count. To have been there once is to be there always; my map indicated this.

When I had to recognize that I occasionally traveled somewhere by train, so not really by myself and neither in direct contact with the road, my dream would fade away in the sense that I did not keep track of these trips. The area around the city was covered, but because I had had all roads, nothing was added anymore, and one day I would remove the map from the wall. It had become meaningless. I haven’t kept it either.

Appendix C

“City”

WASCO



Notes

Introduction

1. The English translations of these stories are ours. The originals are taken from Charlotte Mutsaers, *Paardejam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1996), 187; and from Gerrit Krol, *De oudste jongen* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1998), 120–21.
2. “City” is included in Wasco, *Het Tuitel complex* (Amsterdam: Scratch Books, 2015).
3. “Riding master” (which comes closest to the Dutch word *pikeur*) is not a gender-neutral term. We will address this problem in our discussion of feminist narratology in chapter 3.
4. See Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, “Ideology and Narrative Fiction,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn, Jan Christoph Meister, John Pier, and Wolf Schmid, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 253–69.
5. Franz Kafka, “Up in the Gallery,” in *Kafka: The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 401–2.

1. Before and Surrounding Structuralism

1. For an interesting historical approach, see Kent Puckett, *Narrative Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). A summary history of narratology can be found in Jan Christoph Meister, “Narratology,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 623–45.
2. E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 87.
3. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983), 17.
4. José Ángel García Landa and Susana Onega, eds., *Narratology: An Introduction* (London: Longman, 1996), 3.
5. Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 53.

6. "I would like to argue that temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story." Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 18.
7. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 106–8.
8. As can be derived from James Miller's edition of Henry James's writings on poetics, James's statement "that the *scenic* method is my absolute, my imperative, my *only* salvation" did not at all imply that the author's personality had to be erased. Henry James, *Theory of Fiction*, ed. James E. Miller Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 180. It remains present in the way it shows reality, and therefore *showing* is not an objective method. James writes in his essay "The Art of Fiction" that "the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer" (*Theory of Fiction*, 43). Narratorial invisibility must not be confused with a neutral representation of social reality.
9. Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 110–23.
10. "In order for a text to be an autobiography (or, more generally, an instance of intimate literature), author, narrator, and character have to coincide." Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 15 (our translation).
11. "We might better speak of the 'inferred' than of the 'implied' author." Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 77.
12. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 150.
13. Ansgar Nünning, "'But why will you say that I am mad?': On the Theory, History, and Signals of Unreliable Narration in British Fiction," *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 22, no. 1 (1997): 83–105. We will return to this important article in chapter 3. See also Nünning, "Unreliable, Compared to What? Towards a Cognitive Theory of *Unreliable Narration*: Prolegomena and Hypotheses," in *Grenzüberschreitungen: Narratologie im Kontext/Transcending Boundaries: Narratology in Context*, ed. Walter Grünzweig and Andreas Solbach (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1999), 53–73.
14. Chatman, *Coming to Terms*, 74.
15. Ansgar Nünning, "Renaissance eines anthropomorphisierten Passepartouts oder Nachruf auf ein literaturkritisches Phantom? Überlegungen und Alternativen zum Konzept des 'implied author,'" *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 67, no. 1 (1993): 1–25 (esp. 9–11).

16. Chatman, *Coming to Terms*, 81.
17. Chatman, *Coming to Terms*, 87.
18. Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 145. Only in very exceptional circumstances does Genette think it is useful to distinguish between the image the reader has of the author (that is, the implied author) and the real author. These circumstances include forgery (for example, a fake Rimbaud), ghostwriting (where the name on the book cover is not that of the real author), and collective authorship. Genette admits that the reader always develops an image of the author, but he believes it is wrong to turn that image into a narratological concept. For him the image of the author no longer belongs to narratology: "In my opinion, narratology has no need to go beyond the narrative situation and the two agents 'implied author' and 'implied reader' are clearly situated in that 'beyond'" (137).
19. P. D. Juhl, *Interpretation: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 186. The following statement goes in the same direction: "If the work expresses certain beliefs, then the author is committed to those beliefs and to their truth" (178).
20. See Nünning, "Renaissance," 11–16.
21. For a more elaborate description of this position, see Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, "The Implied Author: A Secular Excommunication," *Style* 45, no. 1 (2011): 11–28. For a completely different analysis of the problems with the implied author, see Harry E. Shaw, "Why Won't Our Terms Stay Put? The Narrative Communication Diagram Scrutinized and Historicized," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 299–311 (esp. 300–301). Shaw makes clear that the implied author is a prime example of the fact that the agents in the communication diagram are problematic "because their nature changes according to whether one thinks of them in terms of information or of rhetoric" (300).
22. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Masque of the Red Death," in *Poetry and Tales*, ed. Patrick F. Quinn (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Library of America, 1984), 485.
23. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 145–95. Chatman speaks about absent narrators such as the collector and the stenographer on, for example, pages 169 and 173.
24. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 88.
25. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 138.

26. Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," *College English* 11, no. 5 (1950): 265–69, cited in W. Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 138.
27. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). We will return to this in chapter 3.
28. Nünning, "Renaissance," 8–9.
29. Gerald Prince, "On Readers and Listeners in Narrative," *Neophilologus* 55, no. 2 (1971): 117–22. See also his "Notes towards a Categorization of Fictional Narratees," *Genre* 4, no. 1 (1971): 100–105; and "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," *Poétique* 14 (1973): 178–96. Prince also discusses the concept in his monograph *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (The Hague: Mouton, 1982).
30. Charlotte Mutsaers, *Zeepijp* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1999), 20–28.
31. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 254.
32. See also Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 154. Martin further divides the mock reader into a model reader and an authorial reader, so that there are just as many kinds of receivers as there are kinds of senders. Chatman saves the symmetry between producers and consumers in a different way. On the sender side, he lists the author, the implied author, and the narrator (who combines the dramatized author, the dramatized narrator, and the undramatized narrator proposed in our figure). On the receiver side, he mentions the narratee, the implied audience, and the real audience. See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 267.
33. Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Unnatural Narratology, Impersonal Voices, Real Authors, and Non-Communicative Narration," in *Unnatural Narratives—Unnatural Narratology*, ed. Jan Alber and Rüdiger Heinze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 71–88 (72).
34. Henrik Skov Nielsen, "Natural Authors, Unnatural Narration," in *Post-classical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, ed. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Columbus: Ohio State University Press), 275–301 (299).
35. Sylvie Patron, "Enunciative Narratology: A French Speciality," in *Current Trends in Narratology*, ed. Greta Olson (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 312–35 (330).
36. Käte Hamburger, *The Logic of Literature*, trans. Marylinn J. Rose (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 141. Patron discusses her re-evaluation of Hamburger in chapter 7 of *Le narrateur: Introduction à la théorie narrative* (Paris: Armand Collin, 2009).
37. See Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires: Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur* (Genève: Slatkine, 2007); Fotis Jannidis, "Zwischen Autor und

- Erzähler,” in *Autorschaft: Positionen und Revisionen*, ed. Heinrich Detering (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2002), 540–56; and Sandra Heinen, “Das Bild des Autors: Überlegungen zum Begriff des ‘impliziten Autors’ und seines Potentials zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Beschreibung von inszenierter Autorschaft,” *Sprachkunst* 33, no. 2 (2002): 327–43.
38. Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 3–78. Monika Fludernik, whose work we will focus on in chapter 3, incorporates this concept in her encompassing theory of narrative.
 39. “Speaker and Audience are present in the literary speech situation [. . .] they have commitments to one another as they do everywhere else, and those commitments are presupposed by both the creator and the receiver of the work. Far from being autonomous, self-contained, self-motivating, context-free objects which exist independently from the ‘pragmatic’ concerns of ‘everyday’ discourse, literary works take place in a context, and like any other utterance they cannot be described apart from that context.” Pratt, *Toward a Speech-Act Theory*, 115.
 40. In theoretical terms the literary speech act is a performative. This type of utterance does not merely represent a specific situation—in that case it would be a constative; rather, it brings something about. As a performative, literature creates a world. The performative’s success depends on certain felicity conditions that derive from and can only be met thanks to the communicative context. These conditions subject literary communication to a series of conventions (such as genre) shared by sender and receiver. The literary text precisely derives its illocutionary force—that is, its power to make the reader believe in the world it evokes—from these conventions, which it uses and activates. See Sandy Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 4–21. According to Susan Sniader Lanser, the world evoked by the literary text is an “alternative world.” Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 291. In addition, the literary utterance amounts to a special kind of illocutionary act, which she calls a “hypothetical” (289). Richard Ohmann speaks in this connection of the “imaginative construction of a world.” Ohmann, “Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 4, no. 1 (1971): 1–19 (17). The hypothetical, alternative, and imaginary qualities of the literary world will resurface in chapter 3, during our discussion of possible worlds theory.
 41. Some postclassical theorists disagree. The cognitive narratologist Alan Palmer, for instance, rejects the idea that consciousness and speech are

- represented in the same way. See Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 53–86. We will discuss Palmer's work extensively in chapter 3.
42. Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*, in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1960), 8:444–525 (493–94). The translation is taken from Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 27.
 43. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 132.
 44. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 172.
 45. Harry Mulisch, *Voer voor psychologen: Zelfportret* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1961), 21.
 46. A. F. Th. van der Heijden, *Asbestemming: Een requiem* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1994), 239.
 47. Jeroen Brouwers, *Sunken Red*, trans. Adrienne Dixon (London: Peter Owen, 1990), 49.
 48. Brouwers, *Sunken Red*, 57.
 49. Willem Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1982), 39–40.
 50. Point of view is an ambiguous concept. Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal, whose work we will deal with extensively in chapter 2, have solved this problem by treating the activities of narration and perception separately. As we will see more immediately, Franz Stanzel's perspective scale is less ambiguous than Norman Friedman's point of view but still more ambiguous than the solution proposed by Genette and Bal. For a summary of the tradition, see Jaap Lintvelt, *Essai de typologie narrative: Le "point de vue"* (Paris: José Corti, 1981), 111–76.
 51. In an earlier essay, Friedman distinguished eight points of view. See Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," *PMLA* 70, no. 5 (1955): 1160–84. Our presentation is based on a reworked version, which appeared in Friedman's book *Form and Meaning in Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975), 134–65.
 52. Hugo Claus, *De Geruchten* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1996).
 53. "The next step toward the objectification of the story material is the elimination not only of the author, who disappeared with the 'I' as witness frame, but also of any narrator whatsoever. Here the reader ostensibly listens to no one; the story comes directly through the minds of the characters as it leaves its mark there." N. Friedman, *Form and Meaning*, 152–53.

54. "Having eliminated the author and then the narrator, we are now ready to dispose of mental states altogether." N. Friedman, *Form and Meaning*, 155.
55. Stanzel's two most important books have been translated into English: *Narrative Situations in the Novel: "Tom Jones," "Moby-Dick," "The Ambassadors," "Ulysses,"* trans. J. Pusack (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971); and *A Theory of Narrative*, trans. Charlotte Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
56. Dorrit Cohn, "The Encirclement of Narrative: On Franz Stanzel's *Theorie des Erzählens*," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 2 (1981): 157–82.
57. Franz K. Stanzel, "A Low-Structuralist at Bay? Further Thoughts on A *Theory of Narrative*," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 4 (1990): 805–16. Stanzel refers (808) to the *Ulysses* chapter we quote here, but the interpretation of the fragments is our development of Stanzel's suggestions.
58. Joyce, *Ulysses*, 150.

2. Structuralism

1. The issue also appeared as a book: *L'analyse structurale du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1981).
2. Tzvetan Todorov, *Grammaire du Décaméron* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 10 (our translation).
3. Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd ed., trans. Laurence Scott, rev. Louis A. Wagner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). The original Russian edition appeared in 1928. Claude Bremond begins his classic study *Logique du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1973) with a long chapter entitled "The Propp Legacy" (9–128), in which he shows how Propp has influenced the narrative theories developed by Greimas, Todorov, and of course Bremond himself.
4. Oswald Ducrot, Tzvetan Todorov, Dan Sperber, Moustaфа Safouan, and François Wahl, *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme?* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 102.
5. A summary description of the three levels is available in Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 27.
6. A. J. Greimas, *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*, trans. Paul J. Perron and Frank H. Collins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 121ff.
7. Rimmon-Kenan criticizes Greimas for reducing the entire literary production by the French authors Georges Bernanos and Guy de Maupassant to such a square. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 12–13.
8. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 20–24.

9. Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," in *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 79–124 (81).
10. We will illustrate these reproaches in our discussion of the separate textual levels. A general critique of structuralist spatialization is offered in Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 1–8.
11. The most important narratological works by Genette are *Narrative Discourse* (originally published in French, 1972), *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (originally published in French, 1983), and *Fiction and Diction*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), which originally appeared in French in 1991. Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), is a newly revised version of the English translation (by Christine Van Boheemen) of her Dutch-language monograph, *De theorie van vertellen en verhalen*, 2nd ed. (Muiderberg: Coutinho, 1980). Finally, Rimmon-Kenan's main contribution is *Narrative Fiction*, a second, slightly extended edition of which came out in 2002. Unless stated otherwise, we use and quote the first edition.
12. See, for example, Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 61–95. His essay was originally published in Russian in 1925.
13. Tomashevsky, "Thematics," 66–78.
14. See Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," esp. 87ff.
15. Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in *Fundamentals of Language*, by Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), 67–96.
16. Ian Fleming, "From a View to a Kill," in *For Your Eyes Only* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 7–37.
17. Fleming, "From a View to a Kill," 7, 9.
18. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 25–83.
19. Umberto Eco, "Narrative Structure in Fleming," in *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, ed. Glenn Most and William W. Stowe (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1983), 93–117.
20. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 111.
21. Joseph Courtés, *Analyse sémiotique du discours: De l'énoncé à l'énonciation* (Paris: Hachette, 1991), 100. See also Dirk De Geest, "La

- sémiotique narrative de A. J. Greimas,” *Image and Narrative* 5 (2003), <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/uncanny/dirkdegeest.htm>.
22. Bremond, *Logique du récit*, 33.
 23. Emma Kafalenos, *Narrative Causalities* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), 7. Just like Todorov and Propp, Kafalenos sees functions as interactions between actants and events. Her schema starts with a “destabilizing event,” continues with a “request that someone alleviate” this event (7), and finally, after various actions, leads to success or failure of the attempted alleviation.
 24. Kafalenos, *Narrative Causalities*, ix.
 25. Bremond, *Logique du récit*, 135.
 26. A. J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at Method*, trans. D. McDowell, R. Schlefier, and A. Velie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).
 27. Cok van der Voort, “De analyse van verhalend proza,” in *Literatuur en context: Een inleiding in de literatuurwetenschap*, ed. Peter Zeeman (Nijmegen: Sun, 1991), 24–58 (41). Mieke Bal translates *destinateur* as “power” (*Narratology*, 204), but we prefer Van der Voort’s more neutral term.
 28. Ruth Amossy and Anne Herschberg Pierrot, *Stérotypes et clichés: Langue, discours, société* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 4–29. We have dealt with the narrative processing of these cultural stereotypes in Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck “A Theory of Narrative in Culture,” *Poetics Today* 38, no. 4 (2017): 605–34. See also the section on cultural narratology in chapter 3.
 29. See, for example, Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative*, 117.
 30. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 73.
 31. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 41.
 32. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 126 ff.
 33. M. M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84–258.
 34. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time,” 99.
 35. “Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel’s abstract elements—philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect—gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work.” Bakhtin, “Forms of Time,” 250.

36. "The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic *generic* significance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions." Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 84–85. After an overview of historical developments in the novel and its concomitant chronotopes, Bakhtin concludes, "The chronotopes we have discussed provide the basis for distinguishing generic types; they lie at the heart of specific varieties of the novel genre, formed and developed over the course of many centuries" (250–51).
37. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time," 165, 225.
38. Fleming, "From a View to a Kill," 37.
39. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 26.
40. Ruth Ronen, "Space in Fiction," *Poetics Today* 7, no. 3 (1986): 421–38 (423).
41. Gabriel Zoran, "Toward a Theory of Space in Narrative," *Poetics Today* 5, no. 2 (1984): 309–34 (310).
42. Zoran, "Toward a Theory of Space," 315.
43. See also Katrin Dennerlein, *Narratologie des Raumes* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 23–37. We will return to Dennerlein in chapter 3 when we discuss possible worlds and storyworlds.
44. See A. J. Greimas, *Maupassant: The Semiotics of Text; Practical Exercises*, trans. Paul Perron (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1988), 76–100.
45. Bal, *Narratology*, 219–21.
46. See Christel van Boheemen-Saaf, "Deconstructivisme," in *Vormen van literatuurwetenschap: Moderne richtingen en hun mogelijkheden voor tekstinterpretatie*, ed. R. T. Segers (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), 229–47 (243–44).
47. See esp. Juri Lotman, *Analysis of the Poetic Text*, trans. D. Barton Johnson (Ann Arbor MI: Ardis, 1976).
48. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 33–160.
49. Günther Müller's article, "Erzählzeit und erzählte Zeit," appeared for the first time in *Festschrift Paul Kluckhohn und Hermann Schneider* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1948), 195–212. It was also incorporated into Günther Müller, *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1968), 269–86.
50. Bal, *Narratology*, 100.
51. Gerard Reve, *Het boek van violet en dood* (Amsterdam: Veen, 1996), 7.
52. Multatuli, *Max Havelaar, or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company*, trans. Roy Edwards (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 64.
53. Multatuli, *Max Havelaar*, 133.
54. Bal, *Narratology*, 99.

55. Gérard Genette, "Discours du récit: Essai de méthode," in *Figures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 90. The Lewin translation (Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 48ff) uses "first narrative," which creates the wrong impression of enumeration.
56. See, for example, Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
57. Eberhard Lämmert, *Bauformen des Erzählens* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1955).
58. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past: Swann's Way*, trans. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Knopf, 1982), 3.
59. Fleming, "From a View to a Kill," 10–11.
60. Gijs IJlander, *Een fabelachtig uitzicht* (Utrecht: Veen, 1990), 167–73, 212–13.
61. Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 67.
62. Barthes, *S/Z*, 191.
63. Philippe Hamon, "Pour un statut sémiologique du personnage," *Littérature* 6, no. 2 (1972): 86–110. We will cite the updated version printed in Roland Barthes, Wolfgang Kayser, Wayne Booth, and Philippe Hamon, *Poétique du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 115–80.
64. Hamon, "Pour un statut," 125–36.
65. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59–70. See note 71 below for our departure from Rimmon-Kenan.
66. Bal calls this type "explicit" characterization. Bal, *Narratology*, 131–32.
67. Gerard Reve, *Het hijgend hert* (Amsterdam: Veen, 1998), 32.
68. William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily," *Selected Short Stories of William Faulkner* (New York: Modern Library, 1961), 49–61. Pierre Bourdieu connects the misleading characterization in this story with the socially constructed expectations of the reader. See Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 322–30.
69. Bal calls this type "implicit" characterization. Bal, *Narratology*, 131–32.
70. Willem Brakman, *Ansichten uit Amerika* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1981), 25, 21, 74.
71. Here we depart from Rimmon-Kenan. She considers characterizations on the basis of name and environment to be a form of analogy, whereas we see name and environment as elements contiguous to the character. For us, these descriptions therefore belong to metonymic characterization.
72. Theodor W. Adorno, "Notes on Kafka," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981), 243ff.

73. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 68–69.
74. Uri Margolin, “Individuals in Narrative Worlds: An Ontological Perspective,” *Poetics Today* 11, no. 4 (1990): 843–71 (862).
75. Margolin, “Individuals in Narrative Worlds,” 857–64.
76. Bal, *Narratology*, 133.
77. Hamon, “Pour un statut,” 154–65.
78. For an extensive formulation of this criticism, see Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory*, 69–104, 236–44.
79. Bal, *Narratology*, 149.
80. He writes, “Mieke Bal seems to have—and sometimes to attribute to me [. . .]—the idea that every narrative statement includes a *focalizer* (character) and a *focalized* (character). [. . .] For me, there is no focalizing or focalized character.” Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 72–73.
81. Genette’s and Bal’s views on focalization are discussed in Pierre Vitoux, “Le jeu de la focalisation,” *Poétique* 51 (1982): 359–68. Vitoux rightly mentions “the double necessity” (362) not only of distinguishing between the subject and object of focalization for the sake of analysis but also of studying them together to see how they interrelate.
82. Apart from internal and external focalization, Genette also conceives of “zero focalization”; see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189. In this respect, we prefer to follow Bal and Rimmon-Kenan, who show that such a triad confuses the focalizer with the focalized. External focalization in Genette is in fact the perception that limits itself to the outside of things, and according to Bal and Rimmon-Kenan, this is a matter of the focalized rather than of the focalizer. The latter can be internal in the case of Genette’s external focalization since a character too can limit his or her perception to the outside of things; see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 74; and Bal, *Narratology*, 145–64. In order to avoid the confusion between external focalizer and externally focalized object, Vitoux proposes to describe the external focalizer as the “non-delegated” agent of perception (who is situated on the highest level in the narrative) and the internal focalizer as the “delegated” one (perception is delegated to a “lower” agent, a character); see Vitoux, “Le jeu de la focalisation,” 360. For a lucid presentation of the various views and problems in connection with focalization, see Manfred Jahn, “Windows of Focalization: Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Narratological Concept,” *Style* 30, no. 2 (1996): 241–67.
83. Edgar Allan Poe, “Metzengerstein,” in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe: Volume II, Tales 1*, ed. James Harrison (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 185–96 (188).

84. Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende*, 39.
85. Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende*, 44.
86. Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende*, 46.
87. Huub Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen" gevolgd door "Het lam" (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1997), 9–10.
88. See William Edmiston, "Focalization and the First-Person Narrator: A Revision of the Theory," *Poetics Today* 10, no. 4 (1989): 729–44. This article contains an excellent summary of the views developed by Genette, Bal, Cohn, and Rimmon-Kenan in connection with focalization. In his book *Hindsight and Insight: Focalization in Four Eighteenth-Century French Novels* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), Edmiston develops his suggestions and provides an interesting overview in "The Evolution of the Concept of Focalization" (147–69).
89. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 45.
90. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 189–90.
91. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 49.
92. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 70–71.
93. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 77–82.
94. Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano* (London: Picador, 1990), 3.
95. Louis Paul Boon, *Minuet*, trans. Adrienne Dixon (New York: Persea Books, 1979), 9.
96. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 77–78. Vitoux submits that an internal focalizer may well speculate about the thoughts and feelings of others but that such a speculation in fact amounts to a transgression of the norm since it is normally reserved for the nondelegated focalizer, that is, the one who perceives from the highest level of the narrative. Vitoux, "Le jeu de la focalisation," 363. He is followed in this suggestion by Edmiston, who uses Genette's term "paralepsis" (*Narrative Discourse*, 207–11) "for this type of infraction, in which the narrating self says more than he could possibly know." Edmiston, "Focalization and the First-Person Narrator," 741. Note that Edmiston describes this special case of focalization in terms of narration. As we will see, the distinction between narrating self and experiencing self is not as rigorous as the structuralists would wish.
97. Brouwers, *Sunken Red*, 54–55.
98. Rimmon-Kenan (*Narrative Fiction*, 81–82) does not connect the ideological and psychological aspects. Since we conceive of the psychological aspect in its broadest sense, we incorporate the cognitive, emotional, and ideological aspects into this category. In all three cases perceptions reflect the inner world of the focalizer, while in the case of the spatiotemporal aspects, the emphasis was on the outside world.

99. Paul Dawson unravels the intricacies of this combination of voice with focalization and critically discusses various views on the topic in his article "The Return of Omniscience in Contemporary Fiction," *Narrative* 17, no. 2 (2009): 143–61 (esp. 144–49). In his "Real Authors and Real Readers: Omniscient Narration and a Discursive Approach to the Narrative Communication Model," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 42, no. 1 (2012): 91–116, Dawson claims that omniscience cannot be captured by separating focalization from narration. It requires a combination of these two into a rhetorical strategy that must be traced to the author: "I will make the claim that focalization or perspective in the broadest sense should be assimilated into the category of voice and approached as a rhetorical strategy of the narrator" (98–99). The narrator's authority (including his supposed omniscience) is linked to the author's: "we must investigate the rhetorical strategies that authors employ as public figures, not just those employed by narrators" (105). So, like many recent narrative theories, Dawson's "discursive narratology" (108) reintroduces the author as a central participant in narrative communication. His monograph *The Return of the Omniscient Narrator: Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013) elaborates this view and links it to the resurrection of the omniscient and highly visible narrator in the wake of postmodernism. To Dawson, omniscient narration is "a legacy in mainstream fiction of postmodern experiments with narrative voice" (*Return of the Omniscient Narrator*, 247).
100. Louis Ferron, *De Walsenkoning: Een duik in het autobiografische diepe* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1993), 83.
101. Umberto Eco, in "Narrative Structure in Fleming," connects this Manichean ideology to the Cold War.
102. Hamburger, *Logic of Literature*, 64–81.
103. Mulisch, *Voer voor psychologen*, 104.
104. See Vitoux, "Le jeu de la focalisation," 365. Gérard Cordesse, in "Narration et focalisation," *Poétique* 76 (1988): 487–98, systematizes the "articulation of narration and focalization" (489) by distinguishing between focalization under a heterodiegetic regime and focalization under a homodiegetic regime; these terms will be defined in the following section, on narration. As a result, focalizer types are usefully connected with narrator types.
105. For the term "narrating instance," see, for example, Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 212.
106. See, for example, Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory*, 143–78. Jonathan Culler too has criticized the anthropomorphism of such theories

- and especially of speech-act narratology. See Culler, "Problems in the Theory of Fiction," *Diacritics* 14, no. 1 (1984): 2–11.
107. Ivan Turgenev, "Asya," in *First Love, and Other Stories*, trans. with introduction and notes by Richard Freeborn (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1999), 100–143 (100).
 108. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado," in *Selected Tales*, ed. Julian Symons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 278–83 (278).
 109. Louis Paul Boon, *Chapel Road*, trans. Adrienne Dixon (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1972), 257–58.
 110. I. L. Pfeijffer, *Het ware leven, een roman* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2006), 291.
 111. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 234–37.
 112. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 92; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 227–34.
 113. Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 35.
 114. Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende*, 52.
 115. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 245.
 116. Van der Voort, "De analyse van verhalend proza," 44.
 117. Cohn, "Encirclement of Narrative," 159–60.
 118. Brakman, *Een weekend in Oostende*, 50.
 119. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 216–23.
 120. Mulisch, *Voer voor psychologen*, 89–231.
 121. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 96.
 122. Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, "Didn't Know Any Better: Race and Unreliable Narration in 'Low-Lands' by Thomas Pynchon," in *Narrative Unreliability in the Twentieth-Century First-Person Novel*, ed. Elke D'hoker and Gunther Martens (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 231–47. In an early article Ansgar Nünning defined unreliability as "the discrepancy between the intentions and value system of the narrator and the fore-knowledge and norms of the reader." Nünning, "But why *will* you say that I am mad?," 87. In a later contribution he reinstated the central role of the author as the "constructive agent who builds into the text explicit signals and tacit assumptions for the authorial or hypothetical ideal audience." Nünning, "Reconceptualizing Unreliable Narration: Synthesizing Cognitive and Rhetorical Approaches," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (London: Blackwell, 2005), 89–107 (100). In our view, neither the author nor the text can force the reader to accept the (un)reliability of a narrator.
 123. Lanser, *Narrative Act*, 86.

124. Lanser, *Narrative Act*, 166.
125. Lanser admits this: "I expect that other theorists will be able to supplement these 'status symbols,' and I would caution against any premature closure of the system." Lanser, *Narrative Act*, 173. She also believes status does not suffice to characterize the narrator and therefore adds two other categories: contact (the type and form of the relationship between narrator and narratee) and stance (the type and form of the relationship between the narrator, his or her characters, and the narrated world).
126. We borrow the term "visual narrator" from Peter Verstraten, *Film Narratology*, trans. Stefan van der Lecq (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 96–124. In film, there is also an auditive narrator (125–45), but this narrative agent is obviously not present in comic books.
127. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 106–16.
128. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 76.
129. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 78.
130. Brian McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts," *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3, no. 2 (1978): 249–87.
131. Joyce, *Ulysses*, 197.
132. Meir Sternberg uses the term "direct-speech fallacy" to describe the mistaken prejudice that direct speech would be a faithful and exact representation of words and thoughts: "From the premise that direct speech (unlike the indirect and other kinds of quotation, let alone the narrative of events) *can* reproduce the original speaker's words, it neither follows that it must perforce do so nor that it ought to do so nor, of course, that it actually does so." Sternberg, "Point of View and the Indirections of Direct Speech," *Language and Style* 15, no. 2 (1982): 67–117 (68).
133. Monika Fludernik, *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction: The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 1993), 17, 19.
134. Fludernik, *Fictions of Language*, 389–433.
135. Fludernik, *Fictions of Language*, 446–53.
136. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 10.
137. Beurskens, "Suikerpruimen," 70.
138. The term is somewhat misleading since "the original" does not refer to a reality that exists prior to representation but to the created impression that we are dealing with the representation of an original reality. Originality is the effect of a strategy instead of its point of departure.

139. The term was coined by Roy Pascal in *The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and Its Functioning in the Nineteenth-Century European Novel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977). A fine summary of the dual-voice approaches is available in Fludernik, *Fictions of Language*, 322–56.
140. See M. M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 259–422.
141. Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).
142. This view derives from the idea that every form of personal expression inevitably includes impersonal patterns: “One can even go on to consider the linguistic expression of emotionality, or of consciousness itself, to be of an intrinsically pre-patterned nature. It then becomes possible to identify both lexical and syntactic expressivity as a strategy of typification or symbolization, employed to symbolize the non-linguistic ([free] indirect) discourse of emotion within the boundaries of linguistic consciousness.” Fludernik, *Fictions of Language*, 426.
143. Genette uses *Hunger*, by Knut Hamsun, as his example of quoted monologue. After a critical discussion of the position such a monologue occupies for Cohn and Stanzel, he develops a diagram in which this form of consciousness representation appears as extradiegetic, homodiegetic, and internally focalized. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 128.
144. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 174.
145. The letter and the answer to it were published as Dorrit Cohn and Gérard Genette, “A Narratological Exchange,” in *Neverending Stories: Toward a Critical Narratology*, ed. Ann Fehn, Ingeborg Hoesterey, and Maria Tatar (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 258–66.
146. Genette writes, “My point is not that it belongs to hetero- rather than to homodiegesis; I simply refuse to ‘assign’ it to either, i.e. to say that it belongs to one form rather than to another.” Cohn and Genette, “Narratological Exchange,” 264.
147. “In the ‘Penelope’ section of *Ulysses*, for example, the ruminations are totally those of Molly Bloom, in her own words (or sounds). She is not functioning as narrator, not telling anyone a story after the fact, but simply carrying on normal thinking processes in the present story moment. The thought stream is simply quoted by a totally effaced narrator.” Chatman, *Coming to Terms*, 147.
148. For an example of a second-degree narrative with an intradiegetic narrator, Genette mentions “any kind of recollection that a character has (in a dream or not).” Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 231.

3. Postclassical Narratology

1. Jan Baetens, "Nouvelle narratologie, nouveau récit/New Narratology, New Story," *Questions de Communication* 31 (2017): 231–43.
2. For an overview, see Martin Kreiswirth, "Narrative Turn in the Humanities," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 377–82. An early mention can be found in Christopher Norris, *Contest of Faculties: Philosophy and Theory after Deconstruction* (London: Methuen, 1985), 20–22. A recent contribution that pays attention to the paradoxes between theory and context (including the French nouveau roman) is Hanna Meretoja, *The Narrative Turn in Fiction and Theory: The Crisis and Return of Storytelling from Robbe-Grillet to Tournier* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
3. See, for instance, Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); and Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 1–21.
4. Raphaël Baroni, "L'empire de la narratologie, ses défis et ses faiblesses," *Questions de Communication* 29 (2016): 1–20.
5. Roy Sommer, "The Merger of Classical and Postclassical Narratologies and the Consolidated Future of Narrative Theory," *DIEGESIS* 1, no. 1 (2012): 143–57 (esp. 144).
6. Baroni, "L'empire de la narratologie," 1. Interestingly, Sommer talks about narratology's "near-death experience of a predominantly post-structuralist fin-de-siècle." Sommer, "Merger of Classical and Postclassical Narratologies," 144.
7. Sommer, "Merger of Classical and Postclassical Narratologies," 154.
8. David Herman, "Introduction: Narratologies," in *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*, ed. David Herman (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 1–30.
9. See Sommer, "Merger of Classical and Postclassical Narratologies."
10. Sommer, "Merger of Classical and Postclassical Narratologies," 153.
11. A prime example of anthropological narratology can be found in Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Ark, 1981), in which the author considers biblical metaphors and narrative procedures as the starting points for (literary) narratives.
12. See René Girard's works *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965); *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (London: Athlone Press, 1986); and *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the*

- World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).
13. Albrecht Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung: Grundzüge einer Allgemeinen Erzähltheorie* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 2012).
 14. Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung*, 21 (our translation).
 15. Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung*, 351 (our translation).
 16. For Freudian narratology, see Peter Brooks's *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); and his *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). For Lacanian narratology, see, for example, Robert Con Davis, ed., *Lacan and Narration: The Psychoanalytic Difference in Narrative Theory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). Since the 1990s trauma theory has become dominant in this field; see Irene Kacandes, "Trauma Theory," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 615–19.
 17. See, for example, the research reported on in the journals *Journal of Memory and Language*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition*, and *Poetics*.
 18. Gordon H. Bower and Daniel G. Morrow, "Mental Models in Narrative Comprehension," *Science* 247, no. 4938 (1990): 44–48; Richard Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
 19. Anthony J. Sanford and Catherine Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
 20. Sanford and Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative*, 19.
 21. The path-breaking article in this respect is William Labov and Joshua Waletzky, "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience," in *Essays on the Verbal and the Visual*, ed. June Helm (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 354–96.
 22. See Franco Moretti's *Maps, Graphs, Trees* (New York: Verso, 2005); and his *Distant Reading* (New York: Verso: 2013). Moretti often visualizes the results of his investigations (e.g., through graphs, to illustrate genre change in the historical novel), which enhances the positivist outlook of his inquiries.
 23. Inderjeet Mani, "Computational Narratology," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 84–92 (84).
 24. Jan Christoph Meister, *Computing Action: A Narratological Approach* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003).
 25. Meister, *Computing Action*, 211.

26. Annelen Brunner, *Automatische Erkennung von Redewiedergabe: Ein Beitrag zur quantitativen Narratologie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).
27. Brunner, *Automatische Erkennung von Redewiedergabe*, 305 (our translation).
28. Brunner, *Automatische Erkennung von Redewiedergabe*, 310 (our translation).
29. Jonathan Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).
30. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narration in Various Media," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 468–88 (475).
31. Werner Wolf, "Towards a Functional Analysis of Intermediality: The Case of Twentieth-Century Musicalized Fiction," in *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration*, ed. Erik Hedling and Ulla-Britte Lagerroth (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 15–34 (15).
32. Ryan, "Narration in Various Media," 471.
33. This means, for instance, that we will not cover film narratology (see Verstraten, *Film Narratology*) or audionarratology (see Jarmila Mildorf and Till Kinzel, eds., *Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016]).
34. Marie-Laure Ryan, ed., *Narrative across Media: The Languages of Storytelling* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 17–18. See also Marie-Laure Ryan, "Story/Worlds/Media: Tuning the Instruments of a Media-Conscious Narratology," in *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 25–49 (29–31).
35. The final component is described as "die Medienangebote, deren Produktion, Distribution, Rezeption und Verarbeitung eindeutig von den drei anderen Komponenten geprägt ist." Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Kalte Faszination: Medien, Kultur, Wissenschaft in der Mediengesellschaft* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2000), 95. See also Jan-Noël Thon, "Mediality," in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, Lori Emerson, and Benjamin J. Robertson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 334–37 (334).
36. Marie-Laure Ryan discusses media as "Semiotic Phenomena," as "Technologies," and as "Cultural Practices" in those three chapters of her book *Avatars of Story* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 16–25.
37. Irina O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," *Intermedialités/Intermedialities* 6 (2005): 43–64 (46).

38. Werner Wolf, "Intermediality," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (London: Routledge, 2005), 252–56 (254).
39. Günther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: Arnold, 2001).
40. Lars Ellerström proposes a sophisticated view of modality and mediality in "The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations," in *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, ed. Lars Ellerström (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 11–48 (esp. 17–24). See also Ruth Page, ed., *New Perspectives on Narrative and Multimodality* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
41. Page, *New Perspectives on Narrative and Multimodality*, 5.
42. Wolf, "Intermediality," 254.
43. Wolf, "Intermediality," 254.
44. Ryan criticizes the term "multimedia media" for this kind of intermediality. See Ryan, "Story/Worlds/Media," 26–27.
45. Wolf, "Intermediality," 253. See also Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation," 46.
46. Irina O. Rajewsky, "Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate about Intermediality," in *Media Borders*, ed. Ellerström, 51–68 (esp. 63–64).
47. Ryan, "Narration in Various Media," 470.
48. Van Leavenworth, "The Developing Storyworld of H. P. Lovecraft," in *Storyworlds across Media*, ed. Ryan and Thon, 332–50 (345).
49. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon, "Storyworlds across Media: Introduction," in *Storyworlds across Media*, ed. Ryan and Thon, 1–21 (4).
50. Eero Tarasti, "Music as a Narrative Art," in *Narrative across Media*, ed. Ryan, 283–304. The same volume contains the excellent "Overview of the Music and Narrative Field," by Emma Kafalenos (275–82). See also Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
51. See the chapter "Narrators across Media," in Jan-Noël Thon, *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 123–220.
52. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation," 54–64.
53. From the viewpoint of cognitive studies, David Ciccoricco presents a detailed analysis of novels, digital fiction, and video games in his *Refiguring Minds in Narrative Media* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

54. Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 1.
55. N. Katherine Hayles, in *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), modifies the five characteristics proposed by Lev Manovich for the new media (numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and cultural transcoding); see Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001), 27–49. Hayles lists “four major characteristics of digital text”: layeredness, multimodality, difference between storage and performance, and fractured temporality (*Electronic Literature*, 163–65). Aarseth (*Cybertext*, 58–67) uses seven variables as the basis of a classification system that leaves room for both traditional and digital texts (and many other text types and media). These variables include how dynamic a text is (as opposed to static texts, as on a printed page, which remain unchanged), personal perspective (requiring the reader-player to become a character in the story), and user functions (stretching beyond the interpretive role of the traditional reader). They are elaborated and modified by Markku Eskelinen in *Cybertext Poetics: The Critical Landscape of New Media Literary Theory* (London: Continuum, 2012), 20–23, 74–79.
56. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). For a study of postmodern rewriting, see Christian Moraru, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). Moraru makes the link with cybernarratology in the chapter entitled “The Pleasure of the Hypertext” (117–23).
57. George Landow’s most influential publication is *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
58. Jaron Lanier and Frank Biocca, “An Insider’s View of the Future of Virtual Reality,” *Journal of Communications* 42, no. 4 (1992): 150–72. Marie-Laure Ryan writes that “though virtual reality is the term that has captured the imagination of the general public, arguably because of the poetic appeal of its built-in oxymoron, the scientific community prefers terms such as artificial reality (the physico-spatial equivalent of artificial intelligence) or virtual environments. The official technical journal of the field, *Presence*, is subtitled *Teleoperators and Virtual Environments*,” Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 358.
59. Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality 2: Revisiting Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns

- Hopkins University Press, 2015), ix. Two further changes that induced Ryan to update her book are the fact that cybertext is no longer the central mode of ergodic literature and also the success of narrative theories that went beyond the realm of the text, into reference, reality, emotion, cognition, and so on. In the new edition Ryan makes extensive use of cognitive studies and finds room (in a new chapter, 137–59) for video games that seem to be non-narrative. Because we will deal with cognitive narratology later and since we will illustrate the tension between narrative and game through the work of Markku Eskelinen, we will mostly stick to the first edition of Ryan's *Narrative as Virtual Reality*.
60. See Marie-Laure Ryan, "Cyberage Narratology: Computers, Metaphor, and Narrative," in *Narratologies*, ed. D. Herman, 113–41; and Ryan's "Cyberspace, Virtuality, and the Text," in *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 78–107.
 61. "I wish to challenge the recurrent practice of applying the theories of literary criticism to a new empirical field, seemingly without any reassessment of the terms and concepts involved. This lack of self-reflection places the research in direct danger of turning the vocabulary of literary theory into a set of unfocused metaphors." Aarseth, *Cybertext*, 14.
 62. "I refer to the idea of a narrative text as a labyrinth, a game, or an imaginary world [. . .]. The problem with these powerful metaphors, when they begin to affect the critic's perspective and judgment, is that they enable a systematic misrepresentation [. . .] a spatiodynamic fallacy where the narrative is not perceived as a presentation of a world but rather as that world itself [. . .]. The study of cybertext reveals the misprision of the spaciodynamic [*sic*] metaphors of narrative theory [. . .]. It seems to me that the cybertexts fit the game-world-labyrinth terminology in a way that exposes its deficiencies when used on narrative texts." Aarseth, *Cybertext*, 3–5.
 63. Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 347–55. "Literary texts can thus be either self-reflexive or immersive, or they can alternate between these two stances through a game of in and out [. . .] but they cannot offer both experiences at the same time" (284). Roland Barthes introduces the term "writerly" text in *S/Z*, 4.
 64. "The critical discourse that will secure the place of interactive texts in literary history may still remain to be invented, but it is not too early to derive from the hypertext some cognitive lessons about the nuts and bolts of the reading process." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 226.
 65. Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

66. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 235.
67. See Britta Neitzel, "Narrativity of Computer Games," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 608–22. For a primer on narratological and ludological approaches to ergodic literature, see Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin, and Hans Kristian Rustad, eds., *Analyzing Digital Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 21–140.
68. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 135.
69. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 137.
70. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 169.
71. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 178.
72. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 184.
73. Eskelinen, *Cybertext Poetics*, 194.
74. Marie-Laure Ryan uses the term "dysfunctionality" to indicate cyber-texts that do away with the narrative construction of a world in which the reader-player is to be immersed. Some computer games are then labeled as examples of "ludic dysfunctionality." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality* 2, 154. Dysfunctional cybertexts "reject world aesthetics in favor of game aesthetics, thereby ostentatiously preventing immersion" (11). Ryan devotes a chapter (137–59) to such texts, which "are all dysfunctional with respect to standard narrativity and fictional world-creation" (138). Eskelinen's *Cybertext Poetics* dates from 2012, so it does not deal with the revised edition of *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, but it is safe to say that Eskelinen is critical of Ryan's approach to games. In her revised *Narrative as Virtual Reality* 2 (2015), Ryan mentions Eskelinen only once.
75. The term "comics" has some misleading connotations (e.g., that they are comical or just for entertainment) and is sometimes replaced with the more serious-sounding label "graphic novel." However, the name "comics" is so widely used that we will stick to it. For a well-informed, non-polemical discussion of the various labels and for a clear definition of the graphic novel, see Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey, *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), esp. 7–23.
76. Jared Gardner, *Projections: Comics and the History of Twenty-First-Century Storytelling* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), xi.
77. For excellent contextualized studies of the evolution of comics and of the theories surrounding that medium, see the already mentioned Baetens and Frey, *Graphic Novel*; Gardner, *Projections*; and Charles Hatfield, *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005). Baetens and Frey in chapters 2–4 of *Graphic Novel* (27–100) deal with the evolution of the postwar graphic novel, including the interactions between the French, the English, and the American

variants; in chapter 8 (191–216) they reveal the manifold interactions between comics and literary fiction. Gardner traces the changing relations between film and comics, and he unravels the transformations in their reception, both by the public and by the academic world. Hatfield discusses the development of “underground” experimental comics from the 1960s until the beginning of the twenty-first century. He too analyzes the various forms of reception (more detailed and theoretical in his concern with the reader’s experience of the comics’ form) and studies the genre in its relation to the literary domain.

78. “Comics, however, are first of all telling a story,” claims Karin Kukkonen in her *Contemporary Comics Storytelling* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 24. There are of course many “experimental” forms of comics, which go against classic narrativity. An interesting study of the seeming lack of narrativity and tellability in recent and canonized comics (including works by Lewis Trondheim, Chris Ware, and Adrian Tomine) is Greice Schneider, *What Happens When Nothing Happens: Boredom and Everyday Life in Contemporary Comics* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2016). Thierry Groensteen discusses “abstract comics,” which “jettison narrative art,” in *Comics and Narration*, trans. Ann Miller (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), 9–20 (10). However, as Baetens and Frey demonstrate, many of these graphic experiments are not really “antinarrative or nonnarrative” but show “a greater awareness of the storytelling capacities of works that are no longer based on the representation of human or humanized characters and action-driven plots.” Baetens and Frey, *Graphic Novel*, 182.
79. Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*, trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 160.
80. Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, 80. Instead of the “narrator,” Groensteen proposes to talk about the “monstrator” (responsible for the visual presentation) and “reciter” (responsible for the linguistic part) as the two delegates of the ultimate or “fundamental narrator” (79–120, esp. 94–95).
81. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 2.
82. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 5.
83. Hannah Miodrag, *Comics and Language: Reimagining Critical Discourse on the Form* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), esp. 3–58.
84. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 2. However, in the final chapter of *Comics and Narration* (159–76), Groensteen does enter “the terrain of sociology of art, art history, and cultural history” (159) by looking at the links between comics and contemporary art.

85. Miodrag, who is generally very appreciative of Groensteen's views, shows that language is central to many comics and that the workings of the medium cannot be understood without a theoretically sound analysis of its linguistic features. She distances herself from the metaphorical use of the word "language" in many comics studies, which tend to regard the visual system as "a language." Instead she focuses on the multiplicity of relations between visual and linguistic systems by proposing different approaches for the different systems. For the linguistic track of comics she starts from Saussurean linguistics, while for the visual track she combines views taken mainly from visual art theory and film theory. Miodrag, *Comics and Language*, 169–245.
86. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 161.
87. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 12.
88. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 6.
89. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 128.
90. Gardner, *Projections*, 5.
91. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 28–31.
92. Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, 136.
93. Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, 138.
94. Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, 143, 149.
95. Eric S. Rabkin, "Reading Time in Graphic Narrative," in *Teaching the Graphic Novel*, ed. Stephen E. Tabachnik (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009), 36–43.
96. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 18; Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, 33–35.
97. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 24–35.
98. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 21–23.
99. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 103–21.
100. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 110.
101. Hatfield, *Alternative Comics*, 48.
102. Miodrag, *Comics and Language*, 163.
103. Groensteen, *System of Comics*, 156–58.
104. Kai Mikkonen, *The Narratology of Comic Art* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 73–89, 153.
105. Achim Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels: Genre and Narration* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 121.
106. Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels*, 201.
107. François Jost, *L'œuil-caméra: Entre film et roman* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1987). Hescher discusses and adapts Jost's system; see Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels*, 122–43, 171–81.

108. Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels*, 141. Kai Mikkonen discusses five techniques that make it clear to the reader that he or she is seeing things through the eyes of the character. See Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 166–68.
109. Ann Miller distinguishes five types of text; Hescher adds “tags.” See Ann Miller, *Reading bande dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 97–99. The narratologically and semiotically inspired analysis is just a small part of Miller’s approach, which also includes a history, a cultural studies approach, and an overview of subjectivity in comics (ranging from psychoanalysis to gender studies). See also Ann Miller and Bart Beaty, eds., *The French Comics Theory Reader* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014).
110. Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels*, 144–45.
111. Hescher, *Reading Graphic Novels*, 198.
112. Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 137.
113. Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 220–32.
114. Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 155–57. The importance of space, both in the world shown by the comic and in the page layout, is also discussed in Baetens and Frey, *Graphic Novel*, 164–74.
115. Quoted in Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 103.
116. Mikkonen, *Narratology of Comic Art*, 204–9.
117. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 6.
118. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 7, 20.
119. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 51.
120. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 12, 132.
121. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 145.
122. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 33.
123. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 36.
124. There are no page numbers in Wasco, *Het Tuitel complex*.
125. Kukkonen, *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*, 3.
126. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*; Todorov, *Grammaire du Décameron*.
127. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel.”
128. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953; originally published in German, 1946).
129. Erich Kahler, *The Inward Turn of Narrative*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).
130. Cohn, *Transparent Minds*. See the section on consciousness representation in chapter 1 of this handbook.

131. Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, trans. Philip Bennett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992; originally published in French, 1972); Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989).
132. Monika Fludernik, "The Diachronization of Narratology," *Narrative* 11, no. 3 (2003): 331–48.
133. See the section on feminist and queer narratology in this chapter. For an illustration of the links between feminist and diachronic narratology, see Susan Sniader Lanser, "Sapphic Dialogics: Historical Narratology and the Sexuality of Form," in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, ed. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 186–205.
134. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).
135. White, *Metahistory*.
136. Fludernik, "Diachronization of Narratology," 331–32.
137. Monika Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996). We will return to this major monograph in our section on natural narratology toward the end of this chapter.
138. Fludernik, "Diachronization of Narratology," 334–35.
139. Fludernik, "Diachronization of Narratology," 336.
140. Fludernik, "Diachronization of Narratology," 338.
141. Irene J. F. de Jong, "Diachronic Narratology (The Example of Ancient Greek Narrative)," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 115–22 (117).
142. De Jong, "Diachronic Narratology," 119.
143. Irene J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the "Iliad"*, 2nd ed. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2004), 221.
144. De Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers*, 102.
145. Irene J. F. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the "Odyssey"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 119, 192.
146. Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology*, 8–9.
147. Eva von Contzen, "Why We Need a Medieval Narratology: A Manifesto," *DIEGESIS* 3, no. 2 (2014): 1–21 (2).
148. Von Contzen, "Why We Need a Medieval Narratology," 2.
149. Von Contzen, "Why We Need a Medieval Narratology," 8.
150. Armin Schulz, *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive*, ed. Manuel Braun, Alexandra Dunkel, and Jan-Dirk Müller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 1–2 (our translation).

151. Harald Haferland, "'Motivation von hinten': Durchschaubarkeit des Erzählens und Finalität in der Geschichte des Erzählens," *DIEGESIS* 3, no. 2 (2014): 66–95. The notion was originally proposed by Clemens Lugowski in his 1932 dissertation, later published as *Die Form der Individualität im Roman* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), 66–81. Haferland's own translation in the English abstract of the essay is "motivation from behind," but we prefer to highlight the temporal aspect of the notion.
152. Friedrich von Blanckenburg, *Versuch über den Roman*, ed. Eberhard Lämmert (1774; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965).
153. David Herman, ed., *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 1–2.
154. D. Herman, *Emergence of Mind*, 9.
155. Leslie Lockett, "700–1050: Embodiment, Metaphor, and the Mind in Old English Narrative," in *Emergence of Mind*, ed. D. Herman, 43–68 (63).
156. Elizabeth Hart, "1500–1620: Reading, Consciousness, and Romance in the Sixteenth Century," in *Emergence of Mind*, ed. D. Herman, 103–31 (104).
157. David Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 282, quoted in Hart, "1500–1620," 111.
158. Hart, "1500–1620," 119.
159. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (1577/1590; London: Penguin Books, 1987), 117, quoted in Hart, "1500–1620," 122.
160. David Herman, "1880–1945: Re-Minding Modernism," in *Emergence of Mind*, ed. D. Herman, 243–72 (243).
161. D. Herman, "1880–1945," 249–50.
162. D. Herman, "1880–1945," 260.
163. The term "action loops" is borrowed from Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997).
164. Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
165. Thomas Pavel's most important work in this area is *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
166. See, for example, Lubomir Doležel's "Narrative Modalities," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 5, no. 1 (1976): 5–15; and his "Extensional and Intensional Narrative Worlds," *Poetics* 8, no. 1 (1979): 193–212. A more recent

- and encompassing treatment is his *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
167. See especially Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
 168. Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 99–100. A slightly modified formulation can be found in Marie-Laure Ryan, “Possible Worlds,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 726–42.
 169. See, for example, the chapter entitled “Lector in Fabula,” in Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 200–60.
 170. Atte Jongstra, *Het huis M.: Memoires van een spreker* (Amsterdam: Contact, 1993).
 171. Louis Ferron, *De keisnijder van Fichtenwald* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1976).
 172. David Herman, “Hypothetical Focalization,” *Narrative* 2, no. 3 (1994): 230–53 (234–35).
 173. For a discussion of these three meanings of virtual reality, see Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 25–74. For an example of a theory connecting cybernarratology and modal logic, she presents the views of Pierre Lévy, who sees the transformation of modal operators (for example, from “possibility” to “actuality”) as a process of virtualization and/or actualization (35–39). Ryan discusses possible worlds theory in *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 99–105.
 174. For a discussion of referential speech acts, see John Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 72–96. Susan Lanser deals with this view in “Appendix: Speech Theory and the Status of Fictional Discourse” in her *Narrative Act*, 283–94.
 175. Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, 77–82.
 176. Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, 82–83.
 177. Willem Brakman, *De sloop der dingen* (Amsterdam: Querido, 2000), 118.
 178. Brakman, *De sloop der dingen*, 85.
 179. Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 113–32.
 180. Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 121.
 181. Claude Bremond already devoted attention to these aspects in the early stages of narratology, but according to Ronen, he still overemphasized the actually selected possibilities in a specific narrative development. See Bremond, *Logique du récit*; and his “The Logic of Narrative Possibilities,” *New Literary History* 11, no. 3 (1980): 387–411.

182. Uri Margolin, "Character," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 66–79 (71).
183. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 844.
184. Margolin, "Character," 72.
185. Margolin, "Character," 68.
186. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 847.
187. Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 230; Hamon, "Pour un statut," 121; Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 847.
188. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 849.
189. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 850–51.
190. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 851.
191. Margolin, "Character," 72.
192. Following Saul Kripke, Margolin calls proper names "rigid designators, that is, they pick out the same individual at all times and in all worlds in which he exists, irrespective of any property or properties he may possess, acquire, or lose." Uri Margolin, "Naming and Believing: Practices of the Proper Name in Narrative Fiction," *Narrative* 10, no. 2 (2002): 107–27 (109).
193. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 854.
194. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 856.
195. Margolin, "Individuals in Narrative Worlds," 856.
196. Ivan Turgenev, "Asya," in *First Love, and Other Stories*, trans. with introduction and notes by Richard Freeborn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 100–143 (114).
197. "The actual world is the world from which I speak and in which I am immersed, while the nonfactual possible worlds are those at which I am looking from the outside." Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 101.
198. Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, 103–5.
199. Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (London: Granta Books, 1990), 21.
200. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 4.
201. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 5.
202. The journal *Storyworlds* emerged in 2009 and is published by the University of Nebraska Press.
203. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 5.
204. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 19; David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 107.
205. In *Basic Elements of Narrative*, David Herman briefly considers Nelson Goodman's proposal about "ways of worldmaking" (composition and decomposition, weighting, ordering, deletion and supplementation, defor-

- mation), only to decide that as a “broad, generic account of worldmaking procedures” (111), it is not specific enough for narrative analysis. See Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).
206. Paul Werth, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse* (London: Longman, 1999).
 207. Catherine Emmott, *Narrative Comprehension: A Discourse Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 121.
 208. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 6–9.
 209. D. Herman, *Story Logic*, 14.
 210. For an early proposal, see Marie-Laure Ryan, “Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal Departure,” *Poetics* 9, no. 4 (1980): 403–22.
 211. Regarding deictic shift theory, Herman relies on, for example, David A. Zubin and Lynn E. Hewitt, “The Deictic Center: A Theory of Deixis in Narrative,” in *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynn E. Hewitt (Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), 129–55.
 212. D. Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative*, 112. As Herman acknowledges, the metaphor of transportation is also central to Richard Gerrig’s path-breaking study, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds* (1993).
 213. See Barbara Landau and Ray Jackendoff, “‘What’ and ‘Where’ in Spatial Language and Spatial Cognition,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, no. 2 (1993): 217–65.
 214. Dennerlein, *Narratologie des Raumes*, 60 (our translation).
 215. Dennerlein, *Narratologie des Raumes*, 71 (our translation).
 216. Dennerlein points to Fotis Jannidis, *Figur und Person: Beitrag zu einer historischen Narratologie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 31, but the notion already appears in Eco, *Role of the Reader*.
 217. Dennerlein traces the notion of the model back to Philip Johnson-Laird, *Mental Models: Towards a Cognitive Science of Language, Inference, and Consciousness* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), and its use in the study of the processing of narrative to Bower and Morrow, “Mental Models in Narrative Comprehension.”
 218. We will return to these aspects (static space and dynamic actions) when we discuss frames and scripts in the section on cognitive narratology.
 219. Boundaries such as walls and doors play an important part in the reader’s construction of Wasco’s “City.” We will return to their ideological relevance in our discussion of feminist, cultural, and postmodern narratologies.
 220. Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Selected Writings III: Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, ed. Stephen Rudy (New York: Mouton, 1981), 15–51.

221. Ross Chambers, *Story and Situation: Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 146.
222. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, "Narrative as Rhetoric," in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, by David Herman, James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, and Robyn Warhol, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 3–8 (3).
223. Phelan and Rabinowitz, "Narrative as Rhetoric," 5.
224. James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 217.
225. Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 21.
226. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, discussion under "Authors, Narrators, Narration," in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 31.
227. Phelan and Rabinowitz, discussion under "Authors, Narrators, Narration," in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 35.
228. "These rules govern operations or activities that, from the author's perspective, it is appropriate for the reader to perform when transforming texts—and indeed, that it is even necessary for the reader to perform if he or she is to end up with the expected meaning. And they are, from the other end, what readers implicitly call upon when they argue for or against a particular paraphrase of a text. The rules, in other words, serve as a kind of assumed contract between author and reader—they specify the grounds on which the intended reading should take place." Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 43.
229. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 29.
230. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 218.
231. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 219.
232. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 219.
233. "One way to determine the characteristics of the narrative audience is to ask: 'What sort of reader would I have to pretend to be—what would I have to know and believe—if I wanted to take this world of fiction as real?'" Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 96.
234. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 93.
235. Phelan and Rabinowitz, discussion under "Character" and under "Reception and Reader" in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 111–66, 139–43, respectively.
236. James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 5.
237. Phelan and Rabinowitz, discussion under "Authors, Narrators, Narration," in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 34.

238. James Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 31–97.
239. Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 43–58.
240. Phelan and Rabinowitz, discussion under “Time, Plot, Progression,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 58.
241. James Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 16–21.
242. Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 7.
243. Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 118.
244. Cohn, *Distinction of Fiction*, 125.
245. For a short overview, see Simona Zetterberg Gjerlevsen, “Fictionality,” in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn, Jan Christoph Meister, John Pier, and Wolf Schmid, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/fictionality>.
246. Hamburger, *Logic of Literature*, 82–83.
247. No wonder Ann Banfield often refers to Hamburger in her landmark study on free indirect speech, *Unspeakable Sentences*.
248. Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Why Fiction?*, trans. Dorrit Cohn (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010; originally published in French, 1999).
249. Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 15.
250. This is a major difference between rhetorical and possible world theories. Whereas the latter maintains boundaries and separate worlds and starts from the principle of minimal departure, the former starts from the principle of relevance and proposes fluid boundaries plus overlapping discourse. See the discussion of these differences in Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 16–20.
251. Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 36.
252. All quotations from Henrik Skov Nielsen, James Phelan, and Richard Walsh, “Ten Theses about Fictionality,” *Narrative* 23, no. 1 (2015): 61–73 (62). The same issue of *Narrative* contains Paul Dawson’s critical reaction, “Ten Theses against Fictionality” (74–100), as well as “Fictionality as Rhetoric: A Response to Paul Dawson,” the reply by Nielsen, Phelan, and Walsh (101–11).
253. James Phelan, “Fictionality,” *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 32, no. 2 (2017): 235–38 (235).
254. Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 36.
255. Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 23–29.

256. Walsh, *Rhetoric of Fictionality*, 130.
257. Stefan Iversen and Henrik Skov Nielsen, "The Politics of Fictionality in Documentary Form: *The Act of Killing* and *The Ambassador*," *European Journal of English Studies* 20, no. 3 (2016): 249–62 (251).
258. Iversen and Nielsen offer this footnote: "Fictionality = intentionally signaled invention in communication." Iversen and Nielsen, "Politics of Fictionality," 260.
259. Nielsen, Phelan, and Walsh, "Ten Theses about Fictionality," 68–9.
260. See Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), which contains the path-breaking essay "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (originally delivered as a lecture in 1967); Iser, *Implied Reader*; and Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
261. Iser here joins Roman Ingarden, who said that a text contains "places of indeterminacy" (*Unbestimmtheitsstellen*) because a description can never match reality in terms of completion and concreteness. A described table cannot be looked at from all sides; a described event is never seen immediately. As a result, many things remain unclear and unspecified in the text. The reader always sees only aspects of the whole. See Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George G. Grabowicz (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973; originally published in German, 1931).
262. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 117–29.
263. "The very concept of narrative has been broadened, partly under the influence of constructivist theories in the social sciences, to designate a manner of perceiving, organizing, constructing meaning, a mode of cognition different from—but in no way inferior to—logical or discursive thinking." Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 2nd ed., 146.
264. See Elrud Ibsch, "The Cognitive Turn in Narratology," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 2 (1990): 411–18. Interesting overviews of the various approaches and concerns can be found in David Herman, "Cognitive Narratology," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 46–64; and his "Narrative Theory and the Sciences of the Mind," *Literature Compass* 10, no. 5 (2013): 421–36. Useful collections include David Herman, ed., *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences* (Stanford CA: CSLI Publications, 2003); and Lars Bernaerts, Marco Caracciolo, Luc Herman, and Bart Vervaeck, eds., *Stories and Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013). While there is a good deal of enthusiasm within the discipline of narratology for the judicious application of insights from the

- cognitive sciences, there have also been radical critiques, including Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narratology and Cognitive Science: A Problematic Relation," *Style* 44, no. 4 (2010): 469–95; and Meir Sternberg, "Universals of Narrative and Their Cognitivist Fortunes (I)," *Poetics Today* 24, no. 2 (2003): 297–395; followed by "Universals of Narrative and Their Cognitivist Fortunes (II)," *Poetics Today* 24, no. 3 (2003): 517–638.
265. Gerrig considers such a reading as a trip carrying the reader to another world on the wings of a narrative script. Upon his or her return, the reader would always be more or less changed. See Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*. Victor Nell considers reading a form of play absorbing the reader so completely that he or she goes through "cognitive changes." See Victor Nell, *Lost in a Book: The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 8.
 266. Sanford and Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative*, 6.
 267. Sanford and Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative*, 20.
 268. Sanford and Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative*, 6–7.
 269. "The crucial step in this analysis is to distinguish *text features* from *text effects*. [. . .] We use the term *text feature* to refer to anything that can be objectively identified in the text [. . .]. In contrast, *text effects* refer to events in the mind of the reader." Peter Dixon and Marisa Bortolussi, "Prolegomena for a Science of Psychonarratology," in *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, ed. Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 275–87 (277).
 270. D. Herman, "Cognitive Narratology," 46.
 271. D. Herman, "Cognitive Narratology," 46.
 272. Ralf Schneider, "Toward a Cognitive Theory of Literary Character: The Dynamics of Mental-Model Construction," *Style* 35, no. 4 (2001): 607–40; Ralf Schneider, "The Cognitive Theory of Character Reception: An Updated Proposal," *Anglistik* 24, no. 2 (2013): 117–34.
 273. For a more general but equally interesting model of character construction, see Jonathan Culpeper, "A Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Characterization," in *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*, ed. Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper, 251–77 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002). This essay was followed up by Jonathan Culpeper, "Reflections on a Cognitive Stylistic Approach to Characterization," in *Cognitive Poetics: Goals, Gains, and Gaps*, ed. Geert Brône and Jeroen Vandaele (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009), 125–60.
 274. See also Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), for an elaborate account of the relationships between novel reading, empathy, and altruism.

275. See especially Marvin Minsky, "A Framework for Representing Knowledge," in *Frame Conceptions and Text Understanding*, ed. Dieter Menzing (New York: De Gruyter, 1979), 1–25.
276. Manfred Jahn, "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives: Towards a Cognitive Narratology," *Poetics Today* 18, no. 4 (1997): 441–68.
277. Nünning, "But why *will* you say that I am mad?"
278. Jahn is following the thinking of Mieke Bal, "Notes on Narrative Embedding," *Poetics Today* 2, no. 2 (1981): 41–59.
279. Jahn uses Franz Stanzel's reflector concept, but what he says about it allows us to equate it with the internal focalizer.
280. For his discussion of this process, Jahn starts from an article by Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings," *Poetics Today* 1, nos. 1–2 (1979): 35–64, 311–61, and from the already mentioned book by Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction*.
281. See Seymour Chatman's chapter about description in *Coming to Terms*, 22–37. Chatman discusses "The room was dark" on page 30.
282. Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, 52.
283. See Fludernik, *Fictions of Language*, 72ff.
284. David Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Post-classical Narratology," *PMLA* 112, no. 5 (1997): 1046–59.
285. For this definition, Herman uses Dennis Mercadal, *A Dictionary of Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1990).
286. D. Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories," 1051.
287. See also Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology*; and especially the essay by Rachel Giora and Yeshayahu Shen, "Degrees of Narrativity and Strategies of Semantic Reduction," *Poetics* 22, no. 6 (1994): 447–58.
288. D. Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories," 1054.
289. R. Schneider, "Cognitive Theory of Character Reception," 118.
290. R. Schneider, "Cognitive Theory of Character Reception," 121.
291. R. Schneider, "Cognitive Theory of Character Reception," 123.
292. R. Schneider, "Toward a Cognitive Theory of Literary Character," 624.
293. R. Schneider, "Cognitive Theory of Character Reception," 125.
294. Alan Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 176.
295. Alan Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 10.
296. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 9.
297. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 39.

298. William James quoted in Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 30.
299. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 32.
300. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 41.
301. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 26.
302. Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1958).
303. Harold H. Kelley, "Attribution Theory in Social Psychology," in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, ed. David Levine (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 129–238.
304. Palmer, *Social Minds in the Novel*, 20. Palmer also discusses the terms "folk psychology" and "intersubjectivity," which are used to indicate the same ability. For excellent discussions of the latter, see Jordan Zlatev, Timothy P. Racine, Chris Sinha, and Esa Itkonen, eds., *The Shared Mind: Perspectives on Intersubjectivity* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008). For more on folk psychology and a strong argument against theory of mind, see Daniel Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narrative: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2008). Palmer solves the matter by holding on to the term "theory of mind" as a general "label for our ability to understand others" (*Social Minds in the Novel*, 24).
305. Palmer, *Fictional Minds*, 212–14.
306. Alan Palmer, "Attribution Theory," in *Contemporary Stylistics*, ed. Marina Lambrou and Peter Stockwell (London: Continuum, 2007), 81–92 (85).
307. Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 4.
308. Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 18.
309. Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 32.
310. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, xi.
311. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 5.
312. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 4.
313. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 92.
314. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 93.
315. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 123.
316. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 142.
317. Richard Menary, "Introduction to the Special Issue on 4E Cognition," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 9, no. 4 (2010): 459–63 (459).
318. For an elaborate introduction to the post-Cartesian view, see Mark Rowlands, *The New Science of the Mind: From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2010).

319. Peter Garratt, "Introduction: The Cognitive Humanities: Whether and Whither?," in *The Cognitive Humanities: Embodied Mind in Literature and Culture*, ed. Peter Garratt (London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2016), 1–15 (7).
320. See, for instance, Philip W. Fink, Patrick S. Foo, and William H. Warren, "Catching Fly Balls in Virtual Reality: A Critical Test of the Outfielder Problem," *Journal of Vision* 9, no. 13 (2009): 1–8.
321. For a wide-ranging discussion on the embodied mind, see Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).
322. Garratt, "Introduction," 7.
323. For the complete version of this example, see Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (1998): 7–19.
324. Daniel D. Hutto and Patrick McGivern, "How Embodied Is Cognition?," https://www.academia.edu/9614435/How_Embodied_Is_Cognition.
325. Karin Kukkonen and Marco Caracciolo, "Introduction: What Is the 'Second Generation'?" *Style* 48, no. 3 (2014): 261–74 (261).
326. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*.
327. David Herman, *Storytelling and the Sciences of the Mind* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2013). This book is singled out because it draws heavily on enactivist philosophy to analyze the reader's engagement with narrative.
328. The authors refer to Arthur M. Glenberg and Vittorio Gallese, "Action-Based Language: A Theory of Language Acquisition, Comprehension and Production," *Cortex* 48, no. 7 (2012): 905–22.
329. Kukkonen and Caracciolo, "Introduction," 265.
330. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
331. Kukkonen and Caracciolo, "Introduction," 265.
332. Kukkonen and Caracciolo, "Introduction," 265.
333. Lawrence Barsalou, "Simulation, Situated Conceptualization, and Prediction," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 364 (2009): 1281–89.
334. Kukkonen and Caracciolo, "Introduction," 268.
335. Marco Caracciolo, *The Experientiality of Narrative: An Enactivist Approach* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 4.
336. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 49. Caracciolo's main bone of contention with Fludernik's treatment of experientiality in *Towards a "Natural" Narratology* has to do with her apparent construction of it "as a property of narrative rather than as something that 'happens' in the text-reader interaction" (47).

337. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 110.
338. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 4.
339. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 128.
340. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 70.
341. Caracciolo, *Experientiality of Narrative*, 70.
342. For various applications of the theory, see Ralf Schneider and Markus Hartner, eds., *Blending and the Study of Narrative: Approaches and Applications* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).
343. For more information on the concept of “mental space,” see Todd Oakley and Anders Hougaard, eds., *Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008). Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, in their book *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), define it as a “small conceptual [packet] constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (40).
344. María-Ángeles Martínez, *Storyworld Possible Selves* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2018), 9.
345. Fauconnier and Turner, *Way We Think*, 44.
346. Martínez, *Storyworld Possible Selves*, 19–20.
347. For self-schemas, see Hazel R. Markus, “Self-Schemata and Processing Information about the Self,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35, no. 2 (1977): 63–78. For possible selves, see Hazel R. Markus and Paula Nurius, “Possible Selves,” *American Psychologist* 41, no. 9 (1986): 954–69.
348. See also María-Ángeles Martínez, “Storyworld Possible Selves and the Phenomenon of Narrative Immersion: Testing a New Theoretical Construct,” *Narrative* 22, no. 1 (2014): 110–31 (esp. 113–15).
349. See Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, “Ideology,” in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. D. Herman, 217–30; and L. Herman and Vervaeck, “Ideology and Narrative Fiction.”
350. See David Hawkes, *Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), for an excellent overview of the various definitions of ideology.
351. Barthes, *S/Z*, 18–20.
352. Philippe Hamon, *Texte et idéologie: Valeurs, hiérarchies et évaluations dans l’œuvre littéraire* (Paris: PUF, 1984).
353. Hamon, *Texte et idéologie*, 20.
354. More generally, Hamon speaks of four crucial domains in which the text’s ideological effect takes shape: the character’s gaze, language, work, and ethics. Hamon, *Texte et idéologie*, 105–217.
355. Liesbeth Korthals Altes, *Le salut par la fiction? Sens, valeurs et narrativité dans “Le Roi des Aulnes” de Michel Tournier* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992).

356. Vincent Jouve, *Poétique des valeurs* (Paris: PUF, 2001).
357. Jouve, *Poétique des valeurs*, 143–48.
358. See, for example, Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, and also his *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). The Russian original of the latter was published in 1929.
359. Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, trans. Susan Wittig and Valentina Zavarin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 8–11. The Russian original was published in 1970. The translators used a manuscript revised by the author.
360. Uspensky, *Poetics of Composition*, 17, 57, 81.
361. Phelan and Rabinowitz, “Narrative as Rhetoric,” 7.
362. See Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 42–46, for a summary of the four rules.
363. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 84–85.
364. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 86.
365. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 89.
366. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 91.
367. Quoted in Liesbeth Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 3.
368. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 3–4.
369. Meizoz quoted in Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 53.
370. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 122.
371. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 111.
372. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 249.
373. See Wasco, “Mike’s Webisodes 11: Wasco’s stripexperimenten” (interview by Michael Minneboo), <http://www.michaelminneboo.nl/2010/03/mikes-webisodes-11-wascos-stripexperimenten>.
374. Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 175.
375. Booth, *Company We Keep*, 176.
376. Booth, *Company We Keep*, 178.
377. Booth, *Company We Keep*, 179–201.
378. Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 22.
379. Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 22.
380. Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 21.
381. Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 47–50.
382. Roger D. Sell, Adam Borch, and Inna Lindgren, eds., *The Ethics of Literary Communication: Genuineness, Directness, Indirectness* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013), 3.

383. Sell, Borch, and Lindgren, *Ethics of Literary Communication*, 4.
384. Roger D. Sell, "Herbert's Considerateness: A Communicational Assessment," in *Ethics of Literary Communication*, ed. Sell et al., 21–28 (23).
385. J. Hillis Miller, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 20.
386. J. Miller, *Ethics of Reading*, 120.
387. "But if Kant cannot tell you exactly what the law is, where it is, or where it comes from, he can nevertheless tell you to what it is analogous [. . .]. [T]he law as such [. . .] is displaced by metaphor or some other form of analogy." J. Miller, *Ethics of Reading*, 20.
388. J. Miller, *Ethics of Reading*, 23.
389. J. Miller, *Ethics of Reading*, 38–39.
390. Hanna Meretoja, *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History, and the Possible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 28.
391. Meretoja, *Ethics of Storytelling*, 89–90.
392. Jakob Lothe, "Authority, Reliability, and the Challenge of Reading: The Narrative Ethics of Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*," in *Narrative Ethics*, ed. Jakob Lothe and Jeremy Hawthorn, 103–18 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013). Lothe and Hawthorn's edited volume is representative of the great variety of approaches found in studies of narrative ethics. Martha Nussbaum's idealizing humanism, the Chicago school of Wayne Booth, the poststructuralist view on ethics in terms of the ungraspable and undecidable, the political approaches of postcolonial and gender studies—all of these have left traces in *Narrative Ethics*. The similarities are equally telling. All of the essays plead for a confrontation of literature with real-world concerns, and they study narrative ethics from a communicative perspective, that is, the sender-message-receiver frame. For a more extensive review, see Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, dual review of *The Ethics of Literary Communication: Genuineness, Directness, Indirectness*, ed. Roger Sell, Adam Borch, and Inna Lindgren, and *Narrative Ethics*, ed. Jakob Lothe and Jeremy Hawthorn, *Partial Answers* 13, no. 1 (2015): 186–91.
393. Sanford and Emmott, *Mind, Brain and Narrative*, 233–65.
394. Booth, *Company We Keep*, 75. In this connection J. Hillis Miller speaks of "baseless positing" in *Ethics of Reading*, 55. The reader's value judgment does not rest on a foundation made up of the text's narrative procedures; it is a judgment that creates its own grounding. Ross Chambers too says that the authority of a narrative strategy does not reach any further than the readiness of the reader to recognize that authority; see Chambers, *Story and Situation*, 213–14. There is no direct connection

between a specific narrative strategy and a specific ethical stance. This derives not only from the reader but also from the text itself. A specific strategy works only via the detour of the whole text of which it is a part. James Phelan says that “the relation between ideology and a particular element of narrative technique is always mediated by the relation of that element to the rest of the narrative.” Phelan, *Reading People*, 145.

395. See Booth, *Company We Keep*, 169–200.
396. Chambers, *Story and Situation*, 50–72.
397. Newton, *Narrative Ethics*, 58.
398. James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin, “The Lessons of ‘Weymouth’: Homodiegesis, Unreliability, Ethics and *The Remains of the Day*,” in *Narratologies*, ed. D. Herman, 88–109. The term “ethical positioning” is mentioned for the first time on page 88 and elucidated on pages 100–104. Phelan also discusses the unreliable narrator in his *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 105–18.
399. “The more general conclusion, then, is that homodiegesis allows the lack of full coherence between the roles of character and of narrator when that lack both serves the larger purpose of the narrative and when it is registered only after the incoherence operates.” Phelan and Martin, “Lessons of ‘Weymouth,’” 93.
400. “Because the homodiegesis blocks our access to conclusive signals from [Kazuo] Ishiguro and so transfers the responsibility for disambiguating the scene to the flesh-and-blood reader, the deciding factor in how we carry out that responsibility is our individual ethical beliefs as they interact with our understanding of [the first-person narrator] as a particular character in a particular situation.” Phelan and Martin, “Lessons of ‘Weymouth,’” 103.
401. Monika Fludernik, “Fiction vs. Non-Fiction: Narratological Differentiations,” in *Erzählen und Erzähltheorie im 20. Jahrhundert: Festschrift für Wilhelm Fieger*, ed. Jörg Helbig (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 2001), 85–103. Fludernik writes, “Only in fictional narrative do we have true cases of unreliability. It is only in fiction that we assume that the narrator’s contradictions have an ulterior purpose, that of alerting us to the author’s intentions. Since we cannot check out the author’s intentions, this thesis will remain an assumption on the part of the reader” (100).
402. Susan S. Lanser, “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” *Style* 20, no. 3 (1986): 341–63 (341).
403. Lanser, “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” 342–43.
404. Susan Sniader Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 23.

405. Robyn Warhol, "Guilty Cravings: What Feminist Narratology Can Do for Cultural Studies," in *Narratologies*, ed. D. Herman, 341–55 (342); Kathy Mezei, ed., *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 4–5.
406. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1984), 101–14.
407. For a more detailed treatment of the development of feminist narratology, see Ruth Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Feminist Narratology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2–16; and Susan S. Lanser, "Gender and Narrative," in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 206–18.
408. Lanser says first, "Because literary form has a far more uncertain relation to social history than does representational content, even a fully materialist poetics would be hard-pressed to establish definitive correspondences between social ideology and narrative form. I have nonetheless considered it fruitful to venture speculations about causal relationships that others may be able to establish or refute." Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 23. Slightly later Lanser's reader witnesses such a causal speculation when she reproaches Ian Watt's traditional treatment of the novel for being blind to "causal relationships between gender and genre" (37).
409. "For the feminist narratologists working a decade ago [in the late 1980s], gender is a category that preexists the text, an entity, that shapes the text's production and reception." Warhol, "Guilty Cravings," 347.
410. Sally Robinson, *Engendering the Subject: Gender and Self-Representation in Contemporary Women's Fiction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 4.
411. See, for instance, Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
412. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 5.
413. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, article 8: 139–67. Available at <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>.
414. Susan S. Lanser, "Toward (a Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology," in *Narrative Theory Unbound: Queer and Feminist Interventions*, ed. Robyn Warhol and Susan S. Lanser (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015), 23–42 (26).

415. Lanser, "Toward (a Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology," 27.
416. For instance, Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 144–72.
417. See, for instance, Alison Booth, "Screenshots in the *Longue Durée*: Feminist Narratology, Digital Humanities, and Collective Biographies of Women," in *Narrative Theory Unbound*, ed. Warhol and Lanser, 169–93. Interestingly, the collective biography and collective narration are often associated with feminine narrative, as we will see when discussing "gender and narration."
418. Lanser, "Toward (a Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology," 29.
419. Robyn Warhol and Susan S. Lanser, eds., *Narrative Theory Unbound: Queer and Feminist Interventions* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015), 9–10.
420. Warhol and Lanser, *Narrative Theory Unbound*, 2.
421. Robyn Warhol, "A Feminist Approach to Narrative," in *Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman, 9–13 (9).
422. See, for instance, Annemarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); and Michael Warner, ed., *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
423. Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (London: SAGE, 2004), 129. The Butler text they refer to is Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," in *Playing with Fire: Queer Politics, Queer Theories*, ed. Shane Phelan (New York: Routledge, 1997), 19–30.
424. Diane Richardson, Janice McLaughlin, and Mark E. Casey, eds., *Intersections between Feminist and Queer Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Julie L. Nagoshi, Craig T. Nagoshi, and Stephan/ie Brzuzy, eds., *Gender and Sexual Identity: Transcending Feminist and Queer Theory* (New York: Springer, 2014); Mimi Marinucci, *Feminism Is Queer: The Intimate Connection between Queer and Feminist Theory* (New York: Zed Books, 2010).
425. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 45–72.
426. Lanser, "Toward (a Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology," 39.
427. Ruth E. Page, "Feminist Narratology? Literary and Linguistic Perspectives on Gender and Narrativity," *Language and Literature* 12, no. 1 (2003): 43–56. A revised version of this article appeared as "The Question of Gender and Form," which is chapter 2 in Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 20–44.
428. Page, "Feminist Narratology?," 53.
429. See Warhol, "Guilty Cravings," 342.
430. Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 4–5.

431. Teresa de Lauretis, ed., *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 9.
432. Mária Minich Brewer, "A Loosening of Tongues: From Narrative Economy to Women Writing," *Modern Language Notes* 99, no. 5 (1984): 1141–61.
433. See Lanser, "Toward a Feminist Narratology," 353–4.
434. For example, Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 8, 35.
435. See, for instance, Wendy Moffat, "The Narrative Case for Queer Biography," in *Narrative Theory Unbound*, ed. Warhol and Lanser, 210–26.
436. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), iii. From the late 1980s to mid-1990s Gilbert and Gubar produced a three-part sequel, *No Man's Land*, in which they discussed twentieth-century women writers against the same background of the "battle of the sexes." See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The War of the Words* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century; Sexchanges* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century; Letters from the Front* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
437. Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic*, 49–52.
438. Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic*, 73.
439. Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic*, 78. Nancy Miller rejects this direct connection between character and author: "I hope it is understood that I am not suggesting we read a heroine as her author's double." N. Miller, *Subject to Change*, 39.
440. Warhol, discussion under "Authors, Narrators, Narration," in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 39.
441. Nancy Miller therefore resists Roland Barthes's famous view about the death of the author. See Nancy Miller, "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader," in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. De Lauretis, 102–20 (esp. 104–7).
442. Lanser, "Toward a Feminist Narratology," 343–44.
443. Lanser, "Toward (a Queerer and) More (Feminist) Narratology," 37–38.
444. Tania Modleski, "Feminism and the Power of Interpretation: Some Critical Readings," in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. De Lauretis, 121–38 (esp. 128–29). Modleski refers to Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

445. Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic*, 16–17.
446. Modleski, “Feminism and the Power of Interpretation,” 136.
447. He defines a dual hermeneutic as “a negative hermeneutic that discloses [the texts’] complicity with patriarchal ideology, and a positive hermeneutic that recuperates the utopian moment—the authentic kernel—from which they draw a significant portion of their emotional power.” Patrocínio P. Schweickart, “Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading,” in *Speaking of Gender*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Routledge, 1989), 17–44 (28).
448. Schweickart, “Reading Ourselves,” 30–31. More generally, this sympathetic reading would have to enhance female integration: “Feminist readings of female texts are motivated by the need ‘to connect,’ to recuperate, or to formulate—they come to the same thing—the context, the tradition, that would link women writers to one another, to women readers and critics, and to the larger community of women” (32).
449. Schweickart, “Reading Ourselves,” 39.
450. Warhol, discussion under “Reception and the Reader,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 146.
451. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 96.
452. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 100.
453. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 114.
454. Warhol, discussion under “Character,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 121.
455. Nancy K. Miller, *The Heroine’s Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722–1782* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), x.
456. Mieke Bal, *Femmes imaginaires: L’ancien testament au risque d’une narratologie critique* (Paris: Nizet, 1986), 15. This book was translated in a thoroughly revised version (reducing and abridging the theoretical sections) as *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). The material on the page cited in this note did not make it into the translation.
457. Bal, *Lethal Love*, 111.
458. Bal, *Lethal Love*, 128.
459. Lanser, “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” 350.
460. Warhol, discussion under “Authors, Narrators, Narration,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 41.
461. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 8, 35.
462. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 7.
463. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 8.
464. Susan S. Lanser, “Sexing the Narrative: Propriety, Desire, and the Engendering of Narratology,” *Narrative* 3, no. 1 (1995): 85–94. The unreliable

- female heterodiegetic narrator is discussed on page 88 of that article. Lanser recapitulates this argument in “Sexing Narratology: Toward a Gendered Poetics of Narrative Voice,” in *Grenzüberschreitungen: Narratologie im Kontext/Transcending Boundaries: Narratology in Context*, ed. Walter Grünzweig and Andreas Solbach, 167–83 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1999). Unreliability is discussed on page 178 of that publication.
465. The things that may be talked about depend not only on sex and gender but also on sexual preference. Thus it is easier to talk about heterosexual love than about homosexual love. See Lanser, “Sexing the Narrative,” 91.
 466. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 21–22.
 467. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 21.
 468. Lanser, *Fictions of Authority*, 22.
 469. Austen quoted in Warhol, discussion under “Time, Plot, Progression,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 69.
 470. Robyn Warhol, *Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989).
 471. See Luc Herman, *Concepts of Realism* (Columbia SC: Camden House, 1996), 19–23.
 472. Warhol, *Gendered Interventions*, 18.
 473. Robinson, *Engendering the Subject*, 20.
 474. Susan Stanford Friedman, “Religion, Intersectionality, and Queer/ Feminist Narrative Theory: The *Bildungsromane* of Ahdaf Soueif, Leila Aboulela, and Randa Jarrar,” in *Narrative Theory Unbound*, ed. Warhol and Lanser, 101–22 (102).
 475. S. Friedman, “Religion,” 105–7.
 476. S. Friedman, “Religion,” 108.
 477. S. Friedman, “Religion,” 119.
 478. Brewer relies on Annie Leclerc, who sees “the adventure story” as “a model for narrative in general.” Brewer, “Loosening of Tongues,” 1150. The language of such a story is “the discourse of male desire recounting itself through the narrative of adventure, project, enterprise, and conquest” (1151) and always “the discourse of desire as separation and mastery” (1153).
 479. Lanser, “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” 357.
 480. Warhol, discussion under “Time, Plot, Progression,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 66.
 481. Warhol, discussion under “Time, Plot, Progression,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 67.
 482. Page, “Feminist Narratology?,” 46.
 483. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 90.

484. Lanser, "Sexing the Narrative," 93; Lanser, "Sexing Narratology," 180–81.
485. This essay constitutes the fifth chapter of Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 103–57.
486. De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 106. See also Robinson, *Engendering the Subject*.
487. "The Oedipus story [. . .] is in fact paradigmatic to all narratives." De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 112. In addition, "all narrative [. . .] is overlaid with what has been called an Oedipal logic" (125).
488. De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 121.
489. "Double identification" is the term used in De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 143.
490. De Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, 149.
491. De Lauretis, *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, 12.
492. See for example Brewer, "A Loosening of Tongues," 1157–9.
493. See, for example, Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 875–93.
494. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). Traditional, "male" theories consider desire to be a finite focus on an object to be reached and possessed. As such, infinite, "female" desire is a perverse mixed form. See Teresa de Lauretis, *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
495. N. Miller, *Subject to Change*, 14. Miller also speaks of "rematerializing the relations of subjectivity, writing, and literary theory" (16).
496. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 6.
497. For a short and enlightening discussion of the link between affect theory and psychoanalysis in narratology, see Claudia Breger, "Affect and Narratology," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Affect Studies and Textual Criticism*, ed. Donald R. Wehrs and Thomas Blake (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 235–57 (esp. 237–38).
498. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, eds., *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Berlant, *Desire/Love* (New York: Punctum Books, 2012).
499. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

500. Claudia Breger summarizes the various narratological approaches influenced by affect theory and then proposes her own model, which combines aspects from those various strands. Breger, "Affect and Narratology," 241–46.
501. Robyn Warhol, *Having a Good Cry: Effeminate Feelings and Pop-Culture Forms* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003). Sedgwick discusses the difference between paranoid and reparative readings in chapter 4 of her book *Touching Feeling*, 123–51.
502. In this respect we agree with Ruth Page, who says, "It would seem more convincing to argue that if narrative form has anything to do with gender, then this is more prominent when the performance of that story is closely related to gender issues." Page, "Feminist Narratology?," 52. More generally, her empirical research led her to conclude "that *what* is read does indeed bear critically upon *how* it is read." Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 114.
503. See Greta Olson and Sarah Copland, "Towards a Politics of Form," *European Journal of English Studies* 20, no. 3 (2016): 207–21. In this essay Olson and Copland express their wish "to politicise narratological and formal analysis while retaining the form specificity that has been a feature of narratology" (207).
504. See Hanne Birk and Birgit Neumann, "Go-Between: Postkoloniale Erzähltheorie," in *Neue Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Trier: WVT, 2002), 115–52.
505. Gerald Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. Phelan and Rabinowitz, 372–81 (373).
506. Amy Elias, "Ideology and Critique," in *Teaching Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Brian McHale, and James Phelan (New York: Modern Language Association, 2010), 281–94 (281).
507. Elias, "Ideology and Critique," 281.
508. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, eds., *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 3.
509. Sommer, "Merger of Classical and Postclassical," 152–53.
510. Sue J. Kim, "Decolonizing Narrative Theory," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 42, no. 3 (2012): 233–47 (233).
511. Kim, "Decolonizing Narrative Theory," 237.
512. Olson and Copland, "Towards a Politics of Form," 211.
513. Monika Fludernik, "Identity/Alterity," in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. D. Herman, 260–73 (260).
514. Fludernik, "Identity/Alterity," 266. The groundbreaking contributions to postcolonial theory include Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*

- (London: Pluto Press, 1986; originally published in French, 1952); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 271–313; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Robert J. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995).
515. Birk and Neumann, "Go-Between," 123–34 (our translation).
 516. Birk and Neumann, "Go-Between," 125 (our translation).
 517. Birk and Neumann, "Go-Between," 130 (our translation).
 518. Marion Gymnich, "Linguistics and Narratology: The Relevance of Linguistic Criteria to Postcolonial Narratology," in *Literature and Linguistics: Approaches, Models, and Applications*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Ansgar Nünning, and Vera Nünning (Trier: WVT, 2002), 61–73.
 519. Roy Sommer, "'Contextualism' Revisited: A Survey (and Defence) of Postcolonial and Intercultural Narratologies," *Journal of Literary Theory* 1, no. 1 (2007): 61–79 (68–69).
 520. Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," 373.
 521. Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," 374.
 522. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 366.
 523. Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," 374.
 524. Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," 378.
 525. Prince, "On a Postcolonial Narratology," 375.
 526. Kim, "Decolonizing Narrative Theory," 238.
 527. Kim here builds on Lanser, "Sexing the Narrative"; and on Dan Shen, "Why Contextual and Formal Narratologies Need Each Other," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 35, no. 2 (2005): 141–71.
 528. Sommer, "'Contextualism' Revisited," 71.
 529. Identity and alterity are also at the heart of other contextualist narratologies as they center on the intersection of narrative strategies and historical or ideological elements. Sommer's own proposal for an intercultural narratology builds on a corpus of multiculturalist fiction that may feature specific kinds of conflicts that "help to produce intercultural master and counter-narratives challenging, for instance, monocultural notions of identity formation." Sommer, "'Contextualism' Revisited," 73. In a clear bid to avoid the ideological risks of "postcolonial" narratology, Ruth Gilligan calls for a "narratology of otherness" to shed light on formal devices used in "transcultural" fiction such as *Zoli* (2006), the Irish-born American writer Colum McCann's novel about a Romani poet in 1930s Czechoslovakia. Gilligan, "Towards a 'Narratology of Otherness': Colum McCann, Ireland,

- and a New Transcultural Approach,” *Studies in the Novel* 48, no. 1 (2016): 107–25. In her effort to combine ecocriticism, narratology, and postcolonial studies, Erin James proposes an “econarratology,” in which the focus on narrative structure “opens up ecocritical discourse to a set of texts that had previously been illegible to ecocritics”; her cases in point are four postcolonial novels (from Trinidad and Nigeria) that offer nuanced and decidedly non-Western takes on the relationship of human beings with the environment. Erin James, *The Storyworld Accord: Econarratology and Postcolonial Narratives* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 14.
530. Arthur W. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2.
 531. Amossy and Herschberg Pierrot, *Stéréotypes et clichés*, 9–29.
 532. Bart Keunen, “Sociological Approaches to Literary Narrative,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman et al., 544–48; Linda J. Morrison, “Sociology and Narrative,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman et al., 548–50.
 533. David Herman, “Toward a Socionarratology: New Ways of Analyzing Natural-Language Narratives,” in *Narratologies*, ed. D. Herman, 218–46.
 534. On “narrative competence,” see D. Herman, “Toward a Socionarratology,” 220.
 535. D. Herman, “Toward a Socionarratology,” 219.
 536. Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 73–95.
 537. Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 73.
 538. Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 90.
 539. In addition to sociolinguistic and political socio-narratology there are sociological investigations that make use of narratological insights; see, for instance, Barbara Czarniawska, *A Narrative Approach to Organization Studies* (London: SAGE, 1998) and her *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London: SAGE, 2004). While these investigations are extremely interesting, they do not attempt theorization the way we envisage it in this handbook.
 540. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 52–54.
 541. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 97–256.
 542. Ansgar Nünning, “Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies: Towards an Outline of Approaches, Concepts and Potentials,” in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, ed. Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 48–70 (61).
 543. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 147–74.

544. Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London: Routledge, 1994), 18.
545. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 53.
546. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 54.
547. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 14.
548. This distinction also resembles the one between narratives and stories developed in Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung*, 30–31. He restricts the first term to “narrative generalizations” (“erzählerische Generalisierungen”) pertaining to “fundamental templates of customary narratives” (“Grundmuster eines gebrauchlichen Narrativs”), whereas “stories” in his terminology refer to “individual narratives” (“individuelle Geschichten”).
549. Anne Harrington, *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine* (New York: Norton, 2008).
550. Harrington, *Cure Within*, 24–25 (emphasis added).
551. W. Booth quoted in Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, 13.
552. The phrase “the imaginary anthropology of subjectivism” is used as the title of chapter 2 in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
553. Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, 61–66.
554. Astrid Erll and Simone Roggendorf, “Kulturgeschichtliche Narratologie: Die Historisierung und Kontextualisierung kultureller Narrative,” in *Neue Ansätze in der Erzähltheorie*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Trier: WVT, 2002), 73–113.
555. See also Astrid Erll, “Cultural Studies Approaches to Narrative,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman et al., 88–93.
556. Stephen Greenblatt, “Towards a Poetics of Culture,” in *The Greenblatt Reader: Stephen Greenblatt*, ed. Michael Payne (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2005), 18–29. An earlier version of this essay appeared in *Southern Review* 20, no. 1 (1987): 3–15.
557. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 5.
558. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 4.
559. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 5.
560. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 16.
561. The original German phrasing is “Einige Überlegungen zu einer narrativen Theorie der Kulturwissenschaften.” Wolfgang Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative: Eine Einführung* (Wien: Springer, 2008), ix. In the English translation of that work, this is specified as “a narrative theory of culture that is no longer exclusively a narratology in the sense

- of a standard theory of literature.” Wolfgang Müller-Funk, *The Architecture of Modern Culture: Towards a Narrative Cultural Theory* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), vi.
562. Müller-Funk, *Architecture of Modern Culture*, vii.
 563. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 12–13.
 564. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 13 (our translation).
 565. For Müller-Funk’s critical discussion of Bourdieu’s cultural theory, see Wolfgang Müller-Funk, *Kulturtheorie: Einführung in Schlüsseltexte der Kulturwissenschaften* (Tübingen: Francke, 2010), 216–36.
 566. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 13 (our translation).
 567. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 14 (our translation).
 568. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 145–67. An adapted English version of this text can be found in Müller-Funk, *The Architecture of Modern Culture*, 20–41, under the title “The Hidden Narratives: Latency, Repression, Common Sense.”
 569. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 159.
 570. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 164.
 571. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 19 (our translation).
 572. Müller-Funk, *Die Kultur und ihre Narrative*, 14 (our translation).
 573. Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 12–13.
 574. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 34.
 575. Jerome Bruner, “Labov and Waletzky Thirty Years On,” *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7, no. 1–4 (1997): 61–68 (67).
 576. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 67–68.
 577. Bal, *Narratology*, 12.
 578. Bal, *Narratology*, 14.
 579. Mieke Bal, “Close Reading Today: From Narratology to Cultural Analysis,” in *Grenzüberschreitungen*, ed. Grünzweig and Solbach, 19–40 (23).
 580. Bal, *Narratology*, 12.
 581. Bal’s cultural analysis is not unlike New Historicism, as it “is based on a keen awareness of the critic’s situatedness in the present, the social and cultural present from which we look, and look back, at the objects that are always already of the past, objects that we take to define our present culture.” Mieke Bal, *The Practice of Cultural Analysis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.
 582. Bal, *Narratology*, x. (The preface to the first edition is included in the third edition cited here.)
 583. Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 2.

584. Nadel, *Containment Culture*, xi.
585. Nadel, *Containment Culture*, 3.
586. Nadel, *Containment Culture*, 4.
587. Gabriele Helms, *Challenging Canada: Dialogism and Narrative Techniques in Canadian Novels* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 3.
588. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 4.
589. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 7.
590. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 7 (emphasis added).
591. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 7.
592. Meir Sternberg, "Proteus in Quotation-Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse," *Poetics Today* 3, no. 2 (1982): 107–56 (148).
593. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 13.
594. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 8.
595. See, for example, these works by Ansgar Nünning: "Towards a Cultural and Historical Narratology: A Survey of Diachronic Approaches, Concepts, and Research Projects," in *Anglistentag 1999 Mainz: Proceedings*, ed. Bernhard Reitz and Sigrid Rieuwerts (Trier: WVT, 2000), 345–73; "Where Historiographic Metafiction and Narratology Meet: Towards an Applied Cultural Narratology," *Style* 38, no. 3 (2004): 352–7; and "Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies."
596. Ansgar Nünning, "Wie Erzählungen Kulturen erzeugen: Prämissen, Konzepte und Perspektiven für eine Kulturwissenschaftliche Narratologie," in *Kultur–Wissen–Narration: Perspektiven transdisziplinärer Erzählforschung für die Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Alexandra Strohmaier (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 15–53 (28; our translation).
597. A. Nünning, "Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies," 62.
598. A. Nünning, "Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies," 60–61.
599. A. Nünning, "Wie Erzählungen Kulturen erzeugen," 27 (our translation).
600. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative: Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 52–87.
601. Nünning, "Wie Erzählungen Kulturen erzeugen," 32 (our translation).
602. Nünning, "Wie Erzählungen Kulturen erzeugen," 35 (our translation).
603. See Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, "Negotiating the Paranoia Narrative: The Critical Reception of *Bleeding Edge* (2013) by Thomas Pynchon," *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie* 134, no. 1 (2016): 88–112.
604. Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 225–32 (230).

605. Greenblatt, "Culture," 229.
606. Greenblatt, "Culture," 230.
607. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, vii.
608. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 4 (first two quoted phrases), 7, 13.
609. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 12.
610. Patron, *Le narrateur*, 27ff.
611. Nielsen, "Unnatural Narratology, Impersonal Voices," 72.
612. Peter Dixon and Marisa Bortolussi, "Text Is Not Communication: A Challenge to a Common Assumption," *Discourse Processes* 31, no. 1 (2001): 1–25.
613. For an evolutionary approach to communication as an activity that necessarily implies "shared intentionality," see Michael Tomasello, *Origins of Human Communication* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2008).
614. Dixon and Bortolussi, "Text Is Not Communication," 12–15.
615. Greenblatt, "Towards a Poetics of Culture," 28.
616. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 232.
617. Negotiation in the Bourdieu sense of the word resurfaces in Mikko Lehtonen, *Cultural Analysis of Texts* (London: SAGE, 2000), 130; and in Andreas Wimmer, *Kultur als Prozess: Zur Dynamik des Aushandelns von Bedeutungen* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2005), 13.
618. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 52–58.
619. Greenblatt quoted in Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 29.
620. Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, "Tellability as Cultural Negotiation," *Narrative* 17, no. 1 (2009), 111–29; Herman and Vervaeck, "Implied Author."
621. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 30.
622. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 22.
623. Korthals Altes, *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation*, 249.
624. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 47.
625. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 149.
626. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, 67.
627. See, for instance, Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots*; Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*; and Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung*, 237–47.
628. "Narrative Negotiation" is chapter 14 in H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194–213.
629. Abbott, *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 212.

630. See Jahn, "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narratives"; D. Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories"; and Werner Wolf and Walter Bernhart, eds., *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).
631. Charles Fillmore, "Frame Semantics," *Linguistics in the Morning Calm: Selected Papers from SICOL-1981*, ed. the Linguistic Society of Korea (Seoul: Hanshin, 1982), 111–37; Fillmore, "Frames and the Semantics of Understanding," *Quaderni di Semantica* 6, no. 2 (1985): 222–55.
632. Catherine Emmott, "Reading for Pleasure: A Cognitive Poetic Analysis of 'Twists in the Tale' and Other Plot Reversals in Narrative Texts," in *Cognitive Poetics in Practice*, ed. Joanna Gavins and Gerard Steen (London: Routledge, 2003), 146–59.
633. Maria Stefanescu, "The (Dis)Continuity of Framings," in *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media*, ed. Wolf and Bernhart, 329–40 (330).
634. Derek Matravers, *Fiction and Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 102ff.
635. D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 102.
636. Brian Richardson, "U.S. Ethnic and Postcolonial Fiction: Toward a Poetics of Collective Narratives," in *Analyzing World Fiction: New Horizons in Narrative Theory*, ed. Frederick Luis Aldama (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 3–16 (8–13).
637. Hilary P. Dannenberg, "Narrating Multiculturalism in British Media: Voice and Cultural Identity in Television Documentary and Comedy," in *Analyzing World Fiction: New Horizons in Narrative Theory*, ed. Frederick Luis Aldama (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 75–90 (78).
638. Helms, *Challenging Canada*, 5.
639. David B. Morris, "Narrative, Ethics, and Pain: Thinking with Stories," in *The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*, ed. Rita Charon and Martha Montello (New York: Routledge, 2004), 200–223 (216).
640. Katrin Amian, *Rethinking Postmodernism(s): Charles S. Peirce and the Pragmatist Negotiations of Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and Jonathan Safran Foer* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 10.
641. Amian, *Rethinking Postmodernism(s)*, 28.
642. David Herman, "Toward a Socionarratology: New Ways of Analyzing Natural-Language Narratives," in *Narratologies*, ed. D. Herman, 218–46 (239).
643. Bernard S. Jackson, "Narrative Theories and Legal Discourse," in *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*, ed. Christopher Nash (London: Routledge, 1990), 23–51 (48).
644. Czarniawska, *Narrative Approach to Organization Studies*, 9.

645. Anastasia Christou, *Narratives of Place, Culture and Identity: Second-Generation Greek-Americans Return "Home"* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 40.
646. Page, *Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, 186.
647. Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), 4.
648. Koschorke, *Wahrheit und Erfindung*, 359 (our translation).
649. Mark Freeman, "Response to Commentaries on 'Charting the Narrative Unconscious: Cultural Memory and the Challenge of Autobiography,'" in *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, ed. Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 341–49 (344).
650. Kristin Veel, *Narrative Negotiations: Information Structures in Literary Fiction* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009).
651. Veel, *Narrative Negotiations*, 9.
652. Veel, *Narrative Negotiations*, 10.
653. Veel restricts herself to three types of metaphoric organizations. From before information and computer technology (ICT) times these are the novel as archive, as network, and as game. The ICT versions of these three forms of narrative negotiations are the novel as database, as hyperlink, and as computer game.
654. The phrase comes from a chapter title in Jean-Pierre Faye, ed., *Introduction aux langages totalitaires: Théorie et transformations du récit*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hermann, 2003), 77–87.
655. We paraphrase the title of the section "Circulation: Signes économiques, récits idéologiques," in Faye, *Introduction aux langages totalitaires*, 81–83.
656. Faye, *Introduction aux langages totalitaires*, 82 (our translation).
657. Jeffrey Williams, *Theory and the Novel: Narrative Reflexivity in the British Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8.
658. David Herman, "Narrative Ways of Worldmaking," in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, ed. Heinen and Sommer, 71–87 (84).
659. Sandra Heinen, "The Role of Narratology in Narrative Research across the Disciplines," in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, ed. Heinen and Sommer, 193–211 (200).
660. Vilma Hänninen, "A Model of Narrative Circulation," *Narrative Inquiry* 14, no. 1 (2004): 69–85 (73).
661. Hänninen, "Model of Narrative Circulation," 73, 74.
662. Hänninen, "Model of Narrative Circulation," 76.
663. Hänninen, "Model of Narrative Circulation," 77, 79.

664. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 21–22.
665. D. Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative*, 59.
666. This might be compared to Jean-François Lyotard's analysis of the pragmatics of narrative knowledge in his chapter of that title from his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 18–23. In it he discusses the “transmission of narratives,” and especially of “popular narratives,” as a self-legitimizing process that structures our way of thinking: “Narratives [. . .] define what has the right to be said and done in the culture in question, and since they are themselves a part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do” (23). For a discussion of the link with Lyotard's “metanarratives,” see Richard Rorty, “Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity,” *Praxis International* 4, no. 1 (1984): 32–44.
667. David Herman, discussion under “Narrative Values, Aesthetic Values,” in D. Herman et al., *Narrative Theory*, 171.
668. Astrid Erll, “Narratology and Cultural Memory Studies,” in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, ed. Heinen and Sommer, 212–27 (224).
669. See Franco Moretti, ed., *The Novel: Volume 1, History, Geography, and Culture*, and *Volume 2, Forms and Themes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
670. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*; Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
671. Abbott, *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 136.
672. Birgitte Norlyk, Marianne Wolff Lundholt, and Per Krogh Hansen, “Corporate Storytelling,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 105–14 (106).
673. Norlyk, Lundholt, and Hansen, “Corporate Storytelling,” 110.
674. For an overview of theories on narrative identity formation, see Michael Bamberg, “Identity and Narration,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Hühn et al., 241–52. The performative aspects are underlined in Kristin M. Langellier and Eric E. Peterson, *Storytelling in Daily Life: Performing Narrative* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004). For an exemplary work on narrative therapy, see Martin Payne, *Narrative Therapy: An Introduction for Counsellors*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2006).

675. For climate change, see Annika Arnold, *Climate Change and Storytelling: Narratives and Cultural Meaning in Environmental Communication* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
676. Christian Salmon, *Storytelling: Bewitching the Modern Mind*, trans. David Macey (London: Verso, 2010), 21–23.
677. For example, Paul McDonald, *Storytelling: Narratology for Critics and Creative Writers* (London: Greenwich Exchange, 2014); Stephen Denning, *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005); Jeffrey A. Kottler, *Stories We've Heard, Stories We've Told: Life-Changing Narratives in Therapy and Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
678. Ruth Page and Bronwen Thomas, eds., *New Narratives: Stories and Storytelling in the Digital Age* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 2.
679. Christopher Nash, ed., *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1990), xi.
680. Gottschall, *Storytelling Animal*.
681. Jonathan Gottschall and David Sloan Wilson, eds., *The Literary Animal: Evolution and the Nature of Narrative* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005).
682. Brian Boyd, "Evolutionary Theories of Art," in *Literary Animal*, ed. Gottschall and Sloan, 147–76 (151).
683. Brian Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 130.
684. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality," *Narrative* 5, no. 2 (1997): 165–87.
685. See, for example, Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (London: Routledge, 1995). In this section we are primarily dealing with the postmodernism that is closely connected to poststructuralism and deconstructionism.
686. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*.
687. Currie's *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, cited earlier, was published in 1998.
688. See, for example, Jacques Lacan, "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious," in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Jan Miel (London: Longman, 1988), 79–106; White, *Metahistory*; and Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*. Along the same lines, Steven Cohan and Linda Shires use the poststructuralist approach to integrate the study of ideology and culture with classical narratology; see their *Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988).
689. Daniel Punday sees this embeddedness as the materiality of the text with which he means not only language but also material reality as

- evoked in the stories told about it. If a novel brings up a Victorian woman or uses a cathedral as its setting, this woman and this cathedral are already embedded in other narratives, for instance, for the reader. Punday considers “this extra-textual object of reference as always already involved in other narratives.” Daniel Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 143.
690. Punday states that “[t]he tension between these two qualities of discourse [openness and totality] is an inherent part of the post-deconstructive turn to narrative. As I have suggested, what attracts critics to narrative is its ability to be ambiguously deconstructive. Deconstruction is seen by critics variously as too much concerned with textual slippage or too much enamored with inescapable textual laws. [. . .] Narrative seems to accept both textual indeterminacy and totality while bringing this conflict to the surface and—most importantly—suggesting that these two might be resolved productively.” Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 7. As Punday repeatedly shows (25–26), this tension is also inherent in deconstruction itself. His so-called “post-deconstructive” theory of narrative is in fact “loosely deconstructive” (140); it proves a seamless fit for a deconstruction that does not see reality as a text but rather as a continuous tension between reality and text. Only Punday’s emphasis on re-integration and a new totality could somehow be called postdeconstructive.
691. Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, 212–35.
692. Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 54–61.
693. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1971).
694. Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, 236–74.
695. Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 113. This theoretical attention for derailment fits the concrete narrative deregulation that is often called typical of postmodern narrative strategies. See, for example, Michael Roemer, *Telling Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidity of Traditional Narrative* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995).
696. Ursula K. Heise, *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 40.
697. Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 23–47.
698. Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 26; Joseph Francese, *Narrating Postmodern Time and Space* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 107–9.
699. Punday refers to Lyotard, among others, when he is talking about “simultaneous and heterogeneous temporalities.” Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 54.

700. Elana Gomel, *Postmodern Science Fiction and Temporal Imagination* (London: Continuum, 2010).
701. Gomel, *Postmodern Science Fiction*, 29.
702. Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, 179–84.
703. Following Derrida, postmodern narratology holds that repetition precedes the sign and that therefore there is not first an abstract sign (for example, a phoneme) that is then approached and staged in endless repetitions. See, for example, Jacques Derrida, “*Speech and Phenomena*” and *Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). In the literary theory of American deconstruction, this view on repetition has been developed by J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).
704. Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 113–15.
705. This view can be traced back to Derrida’s concept of “dissemination” (the spatial dispersion of meanings), which is inherent in *différance* (the endlessly delayed attribution of meaning). See, for example, Jacques Derrida, “Différance,” *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–28.
706. “The ongoing transformation of one space into another” is the description of postmodern space offered in Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 76. He relies on Edward Soja’s famous *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 222–48.
707. The rhizome is an underground stem or root system that puts out lateral shoots and thus produces a network without a center and without a fixed starting point. See “Introduction: Rhizome,” in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–25. For an application within the postmodern interpretation of narrative, see Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 129–30.
708. Francese, *Narrating Postmodern Time and Space*, 107, 155.
709. Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 39.
710. Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 80–81.
711. Andrew Hock-soon Ng, *Dimensions of Monstrosity in Contemporary Narratives: Theory, Psychoanalysis, Postmodernism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 24.
712. Ng, *Dimensions of Monstrosity*, 43.
713. Ng, *Dimensions of Monstrosity*, 64.
714. Punday develops this idea with the help of Derrida’s views on “the rhetorical topos and the physical site” as geographical and physical space. Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 33.

715. Punday, *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 128–31.
716. See, for example, Barry Smart, *Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1993).
717. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 155–58.
718. See, for example, Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*; Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 1998); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991). Punday offers a brief summary of these theories and connects them with postmodern time-space in *Narrative after Deconstruction*, 87–106.
719. See, for example, Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy,” *New Literary History* 6, no. 1 (1974): 5–74; Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); and Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). For a brief overview of the deconstructionist’s attention to metaphor, see Vincent B. Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), 45–54.
720. Edgar Allan Poe, “Berenice,” in *Selected Tales*, ed. Julian Symons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 18–25. See also Lacan’s previously cited essay, “Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious.”
721. Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, trans. John Rodker (London: Imago, 1949), 213–19.
722. Mark Currie uses the term “cultural schizophrenia” in *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 96–113. His analysis is based on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); and Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*.
723. That phrase constitutes the alternate or secondary title to Jameson, *Postmodernism*, as well as the title of the first chapter (1–54).
724. Patrick O’Neill, *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 23–26, 107–31.
725. O’Neill, *Fictions of Discourse*, 58.
726. Thus Gibson’s readings of Robert Louis Stevenson and Samuel Beckett sometimes remain very traditional. When dealing with *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Gibson speaks about “the voice of a third person narrator in a first person narrative.” His conclusion is, “Another opposition has broken down: that between narrator and narrated, I and he.” Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative*, 140. Such a

reading perfectly fits Genette's theory. When Gibson analyzes the monster in Beckett, he largely reduces it to a classical reading of the textual image of the body. He discusses Beckett's preference for the crippled and aging body as an attack on traditional "anatomy-politics" (262), but this is saying little more than that the body in Beckett's work deviates from the dominant body image.

727. For a critical discussion of this presupposition, see Brian McHale, "Against Nature," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 251–61. Fludernik's reply, in which she sticks to the continuity thesis, can be found within her article "Towards a 'Natural' Narratology Twenty Years After," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 329–47 (332–35).
728. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, xii. The most important Labovian source for Fludernik is William Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).
729. "In recent years new developments in linguistics have introduced the term 'natural' to designate aspects of language which appear to be regulated or motivated by cognitive parameters based on man's experience of embodiedness in a real-world context. The term features as a label in the Austrian linguistic school of *Natürlichkeitstheorie* ('theory of naturalness')." Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 17.
730. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 31.
731. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics*, 134, quoted in Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 31.
732. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 43.
733. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 44.
734. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 45.
735. See Fludernik, "Towards a 'Natural' Narratology Twenty Years After," 341–43, where she clarifies this point in reaction to Marco Caracciolo, "Posthuman Narration as a Test Bed for Experientiality: The Case of Kurt Vonnegut's *Galápagos*," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 303–14, both appearing in the same journal issue.
736. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 26.
737. Dan Shen, "Two Conceptions of Experientiality and Narrativity: Functions, Advantages, and Disadvantages," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 263–70.
738. Maria Mäkelä, "Toward the Non-Natural: Diachronicity and the Trained Reader in Fludernik's Natural Narratology," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 271–77. For Fludernik's response, printed in the same journal issue, see Fludernik, "Towards a 'Natural' Narratology Twenty Years After," 336–37.

739. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 26.
740. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 27.
741. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 30.
742. Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (Elmwood Park IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991), 6–14.
743. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. and rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Mar (London: Continuum, 2004), 305–6.
744. Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 34.
745. For instance: "The development of the realist novel therefore reflects a process of recuperation in the act of reading which starts out with a full instantiation of natural frames and ends with the narrativization of inherently non-natural frames. This process will be repeated again and again to apply to increasingly less recuperable kinds of texts, and the process of narrativization will become a highly sophisticated instrumentarium of cognitive adaptation." Fludernik, *Towards a "Natural" Narratology*, 177.
746. Jonathan Culler, "Naturalization in 'Natural' Narratology," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 243–9. See also Fludernik, "Towards a 'Natural' Narratology Twenty Years After," 329–47 (esp. 332).
747. Fludernik, "Towards a 'Natural' Narratology Twenty Years After," 339.
748. The relevance of Fludernik's theory for such a diachronic narratology is discussed in Karin Kukkonen, "The Curse of Realism: Cognitive Narratology and the Historical Dimension," *Partial Answers* 16, no. 2 (2018): 291–302.
749. Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson, "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology: Beyond Mimetic Models," *Narrative* 18, no. 2 (2010): 113–36.
750. Alber et al., "Unnatural Narratives," 115.
751. Alber et al., "Unnatural Narratives," 114.
752. Alber et al., "Unnatural Narratives," 126.
753. Jan Alber, *Unnatural Narrative: Impossible Worlds in Fiction and Drama* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 14.
754. Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015), 3.
755. Jan Alber, Stefan Iversen, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson, "What Is Unnatural about Unnatural Narratology? A Response to Monika Fludernik," *Narrative* 20, no. 3 (2012): 371–82 (373).
756. Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 38.
757. Monika Fludernik, "How Natural Is 'Unnatural Narratology'; or, What Is Unnatural about Unnatural Narratology," *Narrative* 20, no. 3 (2012): 357–70 (363).

758. Alber et al. "What Is Unnatural," 372–74.
759. Maria Mäkelä, "Heavy Flies: Disproportionate Narration in Literary Realism," in *The Grotesque and the Unnatural*, ed. Markku Salmela and Jarkko Toikkanen (Amherst NY: Cambria Press, 2011), 137–59 (137).
760. Mäkelä, "Heavy Flies," 150.
761. Fludernik, "How Natural Is 'Unnatural Narratology,'" 364.
762. Fludernik, "How Natural Is 'Unnatural Narratology,'" 365.
763. Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 47–48.
764. Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 36.
765. Alber, *Unnatural Narrative*, 46.
766. For instance, Brian Richardson lists a number of "unnatural values" (such as drawing attention to the constructedness of narratives or opposing commonsense narratives). See his "What Is Unnatural Narrative Theory?," in *Unnatural Narratives—Unnatural Narratology*, ed. Jan Alber and Rüdiger Heinze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 23–40 (esp. 38).
767. Richardson, "What Is Unnatural Narrative Theory?," 33.
768. Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative*, 21.
769. Alber et al., "What Is Unnatural," 374.
770. Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative*, xvi–xvii.
771. Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative*, 65–66.
772. Richardson, *Unnatural Narrative*, 45.

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